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THE GLORIES OF MARY.



MARY, QUEEN OF HEAVEN.

THE

GLORIES OF MARY.

BY

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

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THE GLORIES OF MARY.

PART FIRST.

Explanation of the Salve Regina.

THE MANY AND ABUNDANT GRACES DISPENSED BY THE MOTHER OF GOD TO HER DEVOUT CLIENTS.

CHAPTER I.

Salve, Regina, Mater Misericordiæ!

HAIL, HOLY QUEEN, MOTHER OF MERCY!

MARY, OUR QUEEN, OUR MOTHER.

I.

How great should be our Confidence in Mary, who is the Queen of Mercy.

As the glorious Virgin Mary has been raised to the dignity of Mother of the King of kings, it is not without reason that the Church honors her, and wishes her to be honored by all, with the glorious title of Queen. No sooner had Mary consented to be Mother of the Eternal Word, than she merited by this consent to be made Queen of the world and of all creatures. "Since

the flesh of Mary," remarks the Abbot Arnold of Chartres, "was not different from that of Jesus, how can the royal dignity of the Son be denied to the Mother?"

And if Jesus is the King of the universe, Mary is also its Queen, and as Queen she possesses, by right, the whole kingdom of her Son. Hence as many creatures as there are who serve God, so many they are who serve Mary: for as angels and men, and all things that are in heaven and on earth, are subject to the empire of God, so are they also under the dominion of Mary!

Mary, then, is a Queen: but, for our common consolation, be it known that she is a Queen so sweet, clement, and so ready to help us in our miseries, that the holy Church wills that we should salute her in this prayer under the title of Queen of mercy.

Kings at their consecration have their heads anointed with oil, which is the symbol of mercy, to denote that, as kings, they should, above all things, nourish in their hearts feelings of compassion and benevolence towards their subjects. Kings should, then, occupy themselves principally in works of mercy, but not so as to forget the just punishments that are to be inflicted on the guilty. It is, however, not thus with Mary, who, although a Queen, is not a queen of justice,

intent on the punishment of the wicked, but a queen of mercy, intent only on commiserating and pardoning sinners. And this is the reason for which the Church requires that we should expressly call her "the Queen of mercy." This was foretold by the prophet David himself; for he says that God consecrated Mary Queen of mercy, anointing her with the oil of gladness—*God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness*—in order that we miserable children of Adam might rejoice, remembering that in heaven we have this great Queen, overflowing with the unction of mercy and compassion towards us, as St. Bonaventure says.

And how beautifully does not Blessed Albert the Great apply to this subject the history of Queen Esther, who was herself a great type of our Queen Mary! We read, in the fourth chapter of the Book of Esther, that in the reign of Assuerus a decree was issued by which all Jews were condemned to death. Mardochai, who was one of the condemned, addressed himself to Esther, in order that she might interpose with Assuerus, and obtain the revocation of the decree, and thus be the salvation of all. At first Esther declined the office, fearing that such a request might irritate the king still more; but Mardochai reproved her, sending her word that

she was not to think only of saving herself, for God had placed her on the throne to obtain the salvation of all the Jews. "*Think not,*" said Mardochai, "*that thou mayest save thy life only, because thou art in the king's house, more than all the Jews.*" As soon as Assuerus saw Esther standing before him, he asked her, with love, what she came to seek. "*What is thy request?*" The Queen replied, "*If I have found favor in thy sight, O King, give me my people, for which I request.*" Assuerus granted her request, and immediately ordered the revocation of the decree. And now, if Assuerus, through love for Esther, granted, at her request, salvation to the Jews, how can God refuse the prayers of Mary, loving her immensely as he does, when she prays for poor miserable sinners who recommend themselves to her, and says to him, "My King and my God, if I have found favor in Thy sight, give me my people for which I ask, these sinners for whom I entreat Thee." Is it possible that God should refuse her? And who is ignorant of the power of the prayers of Mary with God? *The law of clemency is on her tongue.* St. Bernard asks why the Church calls Mary "the Queen of mercy." And he replies that "it is because we believe that she opens the abyss of the mercy of God to whomsoever she wills, when she wills, and as she wills; so

that there is no sinner, however great, who is lost if Mary protects him."

But perhaps we may fear that Mary would not deign to interpose for some sinners, because they are so overloaded with crimes? Or perhaps we ought to be overawed at the majesty and holiness of this great Queen? "No," says St. Gregory VII., "for the higher and more holy she is, the greater is her sweetness and compassion towards sinners, who have recourse to her with the desire to amend their lives." Kings and queens, with their ostentation of majesty, inspire terror, and cause their subjects to fear to approach them: but what fear, says St. Bernard, can the miserable have to approach this Queen of mercy, for she inspires no terror, and shows no severity to those who come to her, but is all sweetness and gentleness. "Why should human frailty fear to go to Mary? In her there is no austerity, nothing terrible: she is all sweetness, offering milk and wool to all."

But how, to use the words of St. Bonaventure, canst thou, O Mary, who art the Queen of mercy, refuse to succor the miserable? And "who," asks the saint, "are the subjects for mercy, if not the miserable?" "Nothing resists thy power," says St. George of Nicomedia, "for our common Creator, honoring thee as his Mother, considers

thy glory as his own;" and the Son, "exulting in it, fulfils thy petitions as if he were paying a debt"—meaning thereby that although Mary is under an infinite obligation to the Son for having chosen her to be his Mother, yet it cannot be denied that the Son is under great obligation to her for having given him his humanity; and therefore Jesus, to pay, as it were, what he owes to Mary, and glorying in her glory, honors her in a special manner by listening to and granting all her petitions.

How great, then, should be our confidence in this Queen, knowing her great power with God, and that she is so rich and full of mercy that there is no one living on the earth who does not partake of her compassion and favor! This was revealed by our blessed Lady herself to St. Bridget, saying, "I am the Queen of heaven and the Mother of mercy; I am the joy of the just, and the door through which sinners are brought to God. There is no sinner on earth so accursed as to be deprived of my mercy, . . . no one is so cast off by God that he will not return to him, and enjoy his mercy, if he invokes my aid."

Let us, then, have recourse, and always have recourse, to this most sweet Queen, if we would be certain of salvation; and if we are alarmed and disheartened at the sight of our sins, let us re-

member that it is in order to save the greatest and most abandoned sinners, who recommend themselves to her, that Mary is made the Queen of mercy.

Example.

A man of high social position who had not received the sacraments for a long time entered a church of Our Lady of Perpetual Help,—not from any motive of religion or contrition, but merely out of curiosity. As he looked at the picture of Our Lady he began to have a sense of inner perplexity and disquiet. Fear and remorse of conscience took possession of his soul. He turned away his eyes, seeking to distract himself, but the compassionate countenance of the Mother of God remained impressed on his soul and reproached him with his godless life. To rid himself of this depressing thought he went to another side of the church, but here too the face of the most blessed Virgin rose before his eyes. So he left the church to try to find forgetfulness outside, but the compassionate gaze of the merciful Queen of heaven is upon him wherever he turns. At last it seems to him as if Mary were grieving because of his sins. He resolves to reform his life, and a penitent confession and absolution bring back peace and quiet to his heart.

Prayer.

O Mother of my God, and my Lady Mary; as a beggar, all wounded and sore, presents himself before a great queen, so do I present myself before thee, who art the Queen of heaven and earth. From the lofty throne on which thou sittest, disdain not, I implore thee, to cast thine eyes on me, a poor

sinner. God has made thee so rich that thou mightest assist the poor, and has constituted thee Queen of mercy in order that thou mightest relieve the miserable. Behold me then, and pity me: behold me and abandon me not, until thou seest me changed from a sinner into a saint. I know well that I merit nothing; nay, more, that I deserve, on account of my ingratitude, to be deprived of the graces that, through thy means, I have already received from God. But thou, who art the Queen of mercy, seekest not merits, but miseries, in order to help the needy. But who is more needy than I? Accept me, O Mary, for thine own, and as thine, take charge of my salvation. If, during the time past, I have served thee ill, and lost so many occasions of honoring thee, for the future I will be one of thy most loving and faithful servants. I am determined that from this day forward no one shall surpass me in honoring and loving thee, my most amiable Queen. This I promise; and this, with thy help, I hope to execute. Amen.

II.

How much our Confidence in Mary should be Increased because she is our Mother.

Sin, by depriving our souls of divine grace, deprived them also of life. Jesus our Redeemer, with an excess of mercy and love, came to restore this life by his own death on the cross, as he himself declared: *I am come that they may have life.* (John x. 10.) So that by reconciling us with God he made himself the Father of souls in the law of grace. But if Jesus is the Father of our souls,

Mary is also their Mother; for she, by giving us Jesus, gave us true life; and afterwards, by offering the life of her Son on Mount Calvary for our salvation, she brought us forth to the life of grace.

On two occasions, then, according to the holy Fathers, Mary became our spiritual Mother.

The first, according to Blessed Albert the Great, was when she merited to conceive in her virginal womb the Son of God. St. Bernardine of Sienna says the same thing more distinctly, for he tells us "that when at the Annunciation the most blessed Virgin gave the consent which was expected by the Eternal Word before becoming her Son, she from that moment asked our salvation of God with intense ardor, and took it to heart in such a way, that from that moment, as a most loving mother, she bore us in her womb."

The second occasion on which Mary became our spiritual Mother, and brought us forth to the life of grace, was when she offered to the Eternal Father the life of her beloved Son on Mount Calvary, with so bitter sorrow and suffering. So that St. Augustine declares, that "as she then co-operated by her love in the birth of the faithful to the life of grace, she became the spiritual Mother of all who are members of the one Head, Christ Jesus." (De S. Virginitate, C. VI.)

Through the Redemption we belong to the Son of God, but can we belong to him without belonging also to the Mother? Does not that which makes of us children of Jesus also bring us most near to Mary? Did not Jesus signify this when, before expiring, he looked down from the cross on his Mother and on the disciple St. John, who stood at its foot, and, first addressing Mary, he said, *Behold thy son;* as it were saying, Behold the whole human race, which by the offer thou makest of my life for the salvation of all, is even now being born to the life of grace. Then, turning to the disciple, he said, *Behold thy Mother.* (John xix. 26.)

St. John himself, in stating this fact in his gospel, says: "Then he said to the disciple, *Behold thy Mother.*" Here observe well that Jesus Christ did not address himself to John, but to the disciple.

"John is but the name of one, whereas the word disciple is applicable to all; therefore Our Lord makes use of a name common to all, to show that Mary is given as a Mother to us."

The Church applies to Mary these words of the sacred Canticles: *I am the Mother of fair love;* and a commentator, explaining them, says that the Blessed Virgin's love makes her as a most loving mother receive us as her children, "she being all

love towards those whom she has thus adopted." O blessed are they who live under the protection of so loving and powerful a mother!

O most loving Mother! O most compassionate Mother! be thou ever blessed; and ever blessed be God, who has given thee to us for our Mother, and for a secure refuge in all the dangers of this life. Our blessed Lady herself, in a vision, addressed these words to St. Bridget: "As a mother, on seeing her son in the midst of the swords of his enemies, would use every effort to save him, so do I, and will do for all sinners who seek my mercy." Thus it is that, in every engagement with the infernal powers, we shall always certainly conquer by having recourse to the Mother of God, who is also our Mother, saying and repeating again and again: "We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God; we fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God."

Be of good heart, then, all you who are children of Mary. Remember that she accepts as her children all those who choose to be so. "Thus," says St. Bonaventure, "it is that each one who loves this good Mother, and relies on her protection, should animate himself to confidence, remembering that Jesus is our Brother, and Mary our Mother." The same thought makes St. Anselm cry out with joy, and encourage us, say-

ing: "O happy confidence! O safe refuge! the Mother of God is my Mother. How firm, then, should be our confidence, since our salvation depends on the judgment of a good Brother and a tender Mother!" It is, then, our Mother who calls us, and says, in these words of the Book of Proverbs: *He that is a little one, let him turn to me.* (Prov. ix. 4.) Children have always on their lips their mother's name, and in every fear, in every danger, they immediately cry out, Mother, mother! Ah, most sweet Mary! ah, most loving Mother! this is precisely what thou desirest: that we should become children, and call on thee in every danger, and at all times have recourse to thee, because thou desirest to help and save us, as thou hast saved all who have had recourse to thee.

Example.

St. Irenæus, Archbishop of Lyons and martyr († 202), has given us evidence of his devotion to Mary in his scholarly defences of the Queen of heaven from the attacks of the Jews and the heretics of his day. He maintained her immaculate conception against the Jews, and refuted the teachings of the heretics who held that the body of Christ was not derived from Mary. But he was not satisfied only to extol the Blessed Virgin, for his writings abound with praise and reverence for her. He shows how the obedience of Mary offset the evil wrought by the disobedience of Eve, and thus the human race, accursed through the first woman, was

saved through the Virgin and won back from the powers of darkness and death to be given to grace and life.

And what this great saint teaches, and wherein he is confirmed by the Fathers of the Church, is that the Blessed Virgin, through the incomparable virtues whereby she was made worthy to be the Mother of God, stands next highest to her divine Son in the work of the Redemption of mankind. Indeed, our Redemption is her mission, for she has been divinely appointed to intercede for us at the throne of grace. It is this amiable and beneficent distinction of Mary that the Church recalls oftenest to our minds, that we may have perfect confidence in this most blessed Virgin, and that we may be moved to implore her help and intercession in all our trials and sorrows.

Prayer.

O most holy Mother Mary, how is it possible that I, having so holy a mother, should be so wicked; a mother all burning with the love of God, and I loving creatures; a mother so rich in virtue, and I so poor? Ah, amiable Mother, it is true that I do not deserve any longer to be thy son, for by my wicked life I have rendered myself unworthy of so great an honor. Thy name consoles and fills me with tenderness, and reminds me of my obligation to love thee. Thy name excites me to great confidence in thee. When my sins and the divine justice fill me most with consternation, I am all consoled at the thought that thou art my Mother. Allow me then to call thee Mother, my most amiable Mother. Thus do I call thee, and thus will I always call thee. Thou, after God, must be my hope, my refuge, my love in this valley of tears. Thus do I hope to die, breathing forth my soul into thy holy hands, and

saying, My Mother, my Mother Mary, help me, have pity on me! Amen.

III.

The Greatness of the Love which this Mother bears us.

The first reason for the great love that Mary bears to men is the great love that she bears to God; love towards God and love towards our neighbor belong to the same commandment, as expressed by St. John: *This commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God, love also his brother;* so that as the one becomes greater the other also increases. What have not the saints done for their neighbor in consequence of their love towards God! Read only the account of the labors of St. Francis Xavier in the Indies, where, in order to aid the souls of these poor barbarians and bring them to God, he exposed himself to a thousand dangers, clambering amongst the mountains, and seeking out these poor creatures in the caves in which they dwelt like wild beasts. See a St. Francis de Sales, who, in order to convert the heretics of the province of Chablais, risked his life every morning, for a whole year, crawling on his hands and feet over a frozen beam, in order that he might preach to them on the opposite side of a river; a St. Paulinus, who delivered himself up as a slave, in order that he might obtain

liberty for the son of a poor widow; a St. Fidelis, who, in order to draw the heretics of a certain place to God, persisted in going to preach to them, though he knew it would cost him his life. The saints, then, because they loved God much, did much for their neighbor; but who ever loved God as much as Mary loved him? She loved him more in the first moment of her existence than all the saints and angels ever loved him, or will love him; but this we shall explain at length when treating of her virtues. And as amongst all the blessed spirits there is not one that loves God more than Mary loves him, so we neither have nor can have any one who, after God, loves us as much as does this most loving Mother; and if we concentrate all the love that mothers bear their children, husbands and wives one another, all the love of angels and saints for their clients, it does not equal the love of Mary towards a single soul. Moreover, our Mother loves us much because we were recommended to her by her beloved Jesus, when he before expiring said to her, *Woman, behold thy son!* for we were all represented in the person of St. John, as we have already observed: these were his last words; and the last recommendations left before death by persons we love are always treasured and never forgotten.

But again, we are exceedingly dear to Mary on account of the sufferings we cost her. Mothers generally love most those children the preservation of whose lives has cost them the most suffering and anxiety; we are those children for whom, in order to obtain for us the life of grace, Mary was obliged to endure the bitter agony of offering her beloved Jesus to die an ignominious death, and had also to see him expire before her eyes in the midst of the most cruel and unheard-of torments.

It was then by this great offering of Mary that we were born to the life of grace; we are therefore her very dear children, since we cost her so great suffering. And thus, as it is written of the love of the Eternal Father towards men, in giving his own Son to death for us, that *God so loved the world as to give his only-begotten Son*, "so also," says St. Bonaventure, "we can say of Mary, that she has so loved us as to give her only-begotten Son for us." Finally, she gave him to us a thousand and a thousand times, during the three hours preceding his death, and which she spent at the foot of the cross; for during the whole of that time she unceasingly offered, with the extreme of sorrow and the extreme of love, the life of her Son in our behalf, and this with such constancy that St. Anselm and St. Antoninus

say that if executioners had been wanting she herself would have crucified him, in order to obey the Eternal Father who willed his death for our salvation. If Abraham had such fortitude as to be ready to sacrifice with his own hands the life of his son, with far greater fortitude would Mary (far more holy and obedient than Abraham) have sacrificed the life of hers. But let us return to the consideration of the gratitude we owe to Mary for so great an act of love as was the painful sacrifice of the life of her Son, which she made to obtain eternal salvation for us all. God abundantly rewarded Abraham for the sacrifice he was prepared to make of his son Isaac; but we, what return can we make to Mary for the life of her Jesus, a Son far more noble and beloved than the son of Abraham? "This love of Mary," says St. Bonaventure, "has indeed obliged us to love her; for we see that she has surpassed all others in love towards us, since she has given her only Son, whom she loved more than herself, for us." From this arises another motive for the love of Mary towards us; for in us she beholds that which has been purchased at the price of the death of Jesus Christ. If a mother knew that a servant had been ransomed by a beloved son at the price of twenty years of imprisonment and suffering, how greatly would she esteem that servant on this

account alone! And how much more must we suppose that she loves us, now that she has seen that we are valued to such a degree by her Son that he did not disdain to purchase us at such a cost!

Because all men have been redeemed by Jesus, therefore Mary loves and protects them all. It was she who was seen by St. John in the Apocalypse, clothed with the sun: *And a great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun.* And, as no one on earth can be hidden from the heat of the sun, so there is no one living who can be deprived of the love of Mary. "And who," exclaims St. Antoninus, "can ever form an idea of the tender care that this most loving Mother takes of all of us, offering and dispensing her mercy to every one;" for our good Mother desired the salvation of all, and coöperated in obtaining it. "It is evident," says St. Bernard, "that she was solicitous for the whole human race." The devout Bernardine de Bustis says that Mary "loves to do us good, and dispense graces to us far more than we to receive them." "The love that this good Mother bears to us is so great," says Richard of St. Laurence, "that as soon as she perceives our want she comes to our assistance. She comes before she is called."

O, how much does the love of this good Mother

exceed that of all her children! Let them love her as much as they will, Mary is always amongst lovers the most loving, says St. Ignatius the Martyr.

Let them love her as did St. Stanislaus Kostka, who loved this dear Mother so tenderly that in speaking of her he moved all who heard him to love her. He had made new words and new titles with which to honor her name. He never did anything without first turning to her image to ask her blessing. When he said her Office, the Rosary, or other prayers, he did so with the same external marks of affection as he would have done had he been speaking face to face with Mary. Let them love her as did the Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, who said: "Blessed is he who loves thee! If I love Mary, I am certain of perseverance, and shall obtain whatever I wish from God." Let us love her as did Blessed Herman, who called her the spouse of his love. Let us love her as did St. Philip Neri, who was filled with consolation at the mere thought of Mary, and therefore called her his delight. Let us love her as did St. Bonaventure, who called her not only his Lady and Mother, but his heart and soul. Let us love her like that great lover of Mary, St. Bernard, who loved this his sweet Mother so much that he called her the

ravisher of hearts. Let us call her beloved, like St. Bernardine of Sienna, who daily went to visit a devotional picture of Mary, and there, in tender colloquies with his Queen, declared his love. Let us love her as did St. Aloysius Gonzaga, whose love for Mary burnt so unceasingly that whenever he heard the sweet name of his Mother mentioned his countenance lighted up with a fire that was visible to all. Let us love her as much as St. Francis Solano did, who, filled with love for Mary, would sing before her picture, and accompany himself on a musical instrument. Finally, let us love her as so many of her servants have loved her, who never could do enough to show their love. Father John of Trexo, of the Society of Jesus, rejoiced in the name of Slave of Mary; and as a mark of servitude, went often to visit her in some church dedicated in her honor. On reaching the church he poured out abundant tears of tenderness and love for Mary. Father James Martinez, of the same Society, used to say, "Would that I had the hearts of all angels and saints, to love Mary as they love her—would that I had the lives of all men, to give them all for her love!" Let us love her as did those who even cut the beloved name of Mary on their breasts with sharp instruments, as did Francis Binanzio and Radagundis, wife of King Clothaire, or as did

those who could imprint this loved name on their flesh with hot irons, in order that it might remain more distinct and lasting; as did her devout servants Baptist Archinto and Augustine d'Espinosa, both of the Society of Jesus, impelled thereto by the vehemence of their love.

Let us, in fine, do or desire to do all that is possible for a lover to do who intends to make his affection known to the person loved. For be assured that the lovers of Mary will never be able to equal her in love.

Example.

The beatification of Father Paul Francis Libermann, the founder of the "Missionaries of the Sacred Heart of Mary" for the conversion of the negroes, who died a holy death on the Feast of the Purification, 1853, is at present being considered. This holy religious, who before his conversion was a rationalistic Jew and a candidate for the office of rabbi among his people in Zabern, Alsace, was baptized in 1826. He became an epileptic, and this unhappy disease closed the way to the priesthood to him. Then Libermann implored the help of the Blessed Virgin, and made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Loretto. He made it on foot, in the garb of a beggar, covered by a ragged cloak, and he experienced all the humiliations of poverty. But he found what he sought; the light of divine guidance was vouchsafed him, and his sickness disappeared even as did that of Pius IX., who also regained his health at Loretto. Father Libermann was ordained in 1841.

Prayer.

O Lady, O ravisher of hearts! I will exclaim with St. Bernard: "Lady, who with the love and favor thou showest thy servants dost ravish their hearts, ravish also my miserable heart, which desires ardently to love thee." Thou, my Mother, hast enamored a God with thy beauty, and drawn him from heaven into thy chaste womb; and shall I live without loving thee? No, I will say to thee with one of thy most loving sons, John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, I will never rest until I am certain of having obtained thy love. I would that I had a heart to love thee in place of all those unfortunate creatures who love thee not. I would that I could speak with a thousand tongues, that all might know thy greatness, thy holiness, thy mercy, and the love with which thou lovest all who love thee. Had I riches, I would employ them all for thy honor. Had I subjects, I would make them all thy lovers. If the occasion presented itself I would lay down my life for thy glory. Make me thy worthy child. This is my hope.

IV.

Mary, our Queen, our Mother.

Although, as St. Bernard tells us, prayer in the mouth of a sinner is devoid of beauty, as it is unaccompanied by charity, nevertheless it is useful and obtains grace to abandon sin; for, as St. Thomas teaches, the prayer of a sinner, though without merit, is an act which obtains the

grace of forgiveness, since the power of impetration is founded not on the merits of him who asks, but on the divine goodness, and the merits and promises of Jesus Christ, who has said, *Every one that asketh receiveth.* (Luke xi. 10.) The same thing must be said of prayers offered to the divine Mother. "If he who prays," says St. Anselm, "does not merit to be heard, the merits of the Mother, to whom he recommends himself, will intercede effectually."

Therefore St. Bernard exhorts all sinners to have recourse to Mary, invoking her with great confidence; for though the sinner does not himself merit the graces which he asks, yet he receives them, because this Blessed Virgin asks and obtains them from God, on account of her own merits. These are his words, addressing a sinner: "Because thou wast unworthy to receive the grace thyself, it was given to Mary, in order that, through her, thou mightest receive all. If a mother," continues the same saint, "knew that her two sons bore a mortal enmity to each other, and that each plotted against the other's life, would she not exert herself to her utmost in order to reconcile them? This would be the duty of a good mother. And thus it is," the saint goes on to say, "that Mary acts; for she is the Mother of Jesus, and the Mother of men. When she sees

a sinner at enmity with Jesus Christ, she cannot endure it, and does all in her power to make peace between them. Does not St. Ephrem call Mary 'the Refuge of sinners'? St. John of Damascus says she has been divinely appointed to be the refuge of all whose evil deeds are so great that they have merited death. She is the mother of sinners who wish to repent. This most benign Lady only requires that the sinner should recommend himself to her, and purpose amendment. When Mary sees a sinner at her feet, imploring her mercy, she does not consider the crimes with which he is loaded, but the intention with which he comes; and if this is good, even should he have committed all possible sins, this most loving Mother embraces him, and does not disdain to heal the wounds of his soul; for she is not only called the Mother of mercy, but is so truly and indeed, and shows herself such by the love and tenderness with which she assists us all. And this is precisely what the Blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget: "However much a man sins, I am ready immediately to receive him when he repents; nor do I pay attention to the number of his sins, but only to the intention with which he comes: I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds; for I am called, and truly am, the Mother of mercy." "And who can ever tell," says

the devout Ludovicus Blosius, "the goodness, the mercy, the compassion, the love, the benignity, the clemency, the fidelity, the benevolence, the charity, of this Virgin Mother towards men? It is such that no words can express it."

"Let us, then," says St. Bernard, "cast ourselves at the feet of this good Mother, and embracing them, let us not depart until she blesses us, and thus accepts us for her children." Would that all sinners had recourse to this sweet mother! for then certainly all would be pardoned by God.

Example.

The holy St. Leonard of Port Maurice, who died in 1751 after preaching 326 missions, preached with particular fervor and eloquence when his sermon was on the Blessed Virgin. "When I reflect," he said once, "on all the graces and benefits which I have received from the Blessed Virgin—and for the glory due my high Protectress I must testify to them here—I feel as though I were in one of those churches in which there is a miraculous picture of the holy Mother and where the walls are hung with memorial tablets for graces granted by Mary. The holy office which I hold, the habit I wear, all these I owe to Mary. I have not a single good thought, not one right exercise of my will, not a pure impulse of my heart, but comes through her grace. Be thou," he continued, "forever praised, my Gracious Benefactress. When I am saved at last it will be through thy mercy, which I hope to praise through all eternity. I would die that I might live with

Mary. Oh, my beloved people, it is not an empty word, it is my dearest wish—I desire to die that I may live with Mary. Ah, my dear Mother, look upon thy poor child, longing to come to thee! And you, beloved, say a quiet Hail Mary for me. Oh, that you might win this grace for me, that I might leave this pulpit to dwell with the Blessed Virgin. Amen." Thus one saint preached of Our Lady.

Prayer.

O my sovereign Queen and worthy Mother of my God, most holy Mary; I, seeing myself, as I do, so despicable and loaded with so many sins, ought not to presume to call thee Mother, or even to approach thee; yet I will not allow my miseries to deprive me of the consolation and confidence that I feel in calling thee Mother; I know well that I deserve that thou shouldst reject me; but I beseech thee to remember all that thy Son Jesus has endured for me, and then reject me if thou canst. To thee have I recourse; thou canst help me; my Mother, help me. Say not that thou canst not do so; for I know that thou art all-powerful, and that thou obtainest whatever thou desirest of God. Thou, O Jesus, art my Father, and thou, Mary, art my Mother. You both love the most miserable, and go seeking them in order to save them. I deserve hell, and am the most miserable of all. But you need not seek me, nor do I presume to ask so much. I now present myself before you with a certain hope that I shall not be abandoned. Behold me at your feet; my Jesus, forgive me; my Mother Mary, help me.

CHAPTER II.

Vita, Dulcedo.

OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS.

MARY, OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS.

I.

Mary is our Life, because she obtains for us the Pardon of our Sins.

To understand why the holy Church makes us call Mary our life, we must know that as the soul gives life to the body so does divine grace give life to the soul; for a soul without grace has the name of being alive, but is in truth dead, as it was said of one in the Apocalypse, *Thou hast the name of being alive, and thou art dead.* Mary, then, in obtaining this grace for sinners by her intercession, thus restores them to life. So that to have recourse to Mary is the same thing as to find the grace of God. The Church applies to her the following words: *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.* "Listen," exclaims St. Bonaventure on these words, "listen, all you who desire the kingdom

of God: honor the most blessed Virgin Mary, and you will find life and eternal salvation."

St. Bernardine of Sienna says that if God did not destroy man after his first sin, it was on account of his singular love for this holy Virgin, who was destined to be born of this race. Hence St. Bernard was right in exhorting us "to seek for grace, and to seek it by Mary;" meaning that if we have had the misfortune to lose the grace of God, we should seek to recover it, but we should do so through Mary; for though we may have lost it, she has found it; and hence the saint calls her "the finder of grace." The angel Gabriel expressly declared this for our consolation when he saluted the Blessed Virgin, saying, *Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace.* (Luke i. 30.) But if Mary had never been deprived of grace, how could the archangel say that she had then found it? A thing may be found by a person who did not previously possess it; but we are told by the same archangel that the Blessed Virgin was always with God, always in grace, nay, full of grace. *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.* Since Mary, then, did not find grace for herself, she being always full of it, for whom did she find it? Cardinal Hugo, in his commentary on the above text, replies that she found it for sinners who had lost it. "Let sinners, then," says this

devout writer, "who by their crimes have lost grace, address themselves to the Blessed Virgin, for with her they will surely find it; let them humbly salute her, and say with confidence, 'Lady, that which has been found must be restored to him who has lost it; restore us, therefore, our property which thou hast found.'"

On this subject Richard of St. Laurence concludes "that if we hope to recover the grace of God, we must go to Mary, who has found it, and finds it always." And as she always was and always will be dear to God, if we have recourse to her we shall certainly succeed. St. Bernard encourages sinners, saying, "Go to this Mother of mercy, and show her the wounds which thy sins have left on thy soul; then will she certainly entreat her Son, by the breasts that gave him suck, to pardon ye all. And this divine Son, who loves her so tenderly, will most certainly grant her petition." In this sense it is that the holy Church, in her almost daily prayer, calls upon us to beg Our Lord to grant us the powerful help of the intercession of Mary to rise from our sins: "Grant Thy help to our weakness, O most merciful God; and that we, who are mindful of the holy Mother of God, may by the help of her intercession rise from our iniquities." With reason does St. Bernard call her "the sinners' lad-

der;" since she, the most compassionate Queen, extending her hand to them, draws them from an abyss of sin, and enables them to ascend to God. With reason does St. Augustine call her "the only hope of sinners;" for by her help alone can we hope for the remission of our sins.

St. John Chrysostom also says "that sinners receive pardon by the intercession of Mary alone." And therefore the saint, in the name of all sinners, thus addresses her: "Hail, Mother of God and of us all, 'heaven,' where God dwells, 'throne,' from which Our Lord dispenses all grace, 'fair daughter, Virgin, honor, glory, and firmament of our Church,' assiduously pray to Jesus that in the day of judgment we may find mercy through thee, and receive the reward prepared by God for those who love him." Therefore St. Germanus says, "O Mother of God, thy protection never ceases, thy intercession is life, and thy patronage never fails." "Distrust not, O sinner," says the devout Bernardine de Bustis, "even if thou hast committed all possible sins: go with confidence to this most glorious Lady, and thou wilt find her hands filled with mercy and bounty." And he adds, "for she desires more to do thee good than thou canst desire to receive favors from her."

St. Andrew of Crete calls Mary the pledge of

divine mercy; meaning that, when sinners have recourse to Mary that they may be reconciled with God, he assures them of pardon and gives them a pledge of it; and this pledge is Mary, whom he has bestowed upon us for our advocate, and by whose intercession, by virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, God forgives all who have recourse to her.

No sinner having recourse to the compassion of Mary should fear being rejected; for she is the Mother of mercy, and as such desires to save the most miserable. Mary is that happy ark, says St. Bernard, "in which those who take refuge will never suffer the shipwreck of eternal perdition." Let us, then, enter this ark, let us take refuge under the mantle of Mary, and she most certainly will not reject us, but will secure our salvation.

Example.

Once a great multitude of people were hurrying to the church on Mount Calvary to venerate the holy cross on which Our Redeemer died. Urged by curiosity, Mary of Egypt, another Magdalen, joined the throngs. But at the door of the church an invisible hand seemed to hold her back. Her heart jumped; but she took the impression to be a mere freak of her imagination and tried once more, to be pushed back again. The startled woman summoned all her courage and tried once more to force her way into the Sacred Presence within. This

time the force of the blow and her fright made her fall to the earth. Pale and shaken in every fibre she lay in the dust. Horror of herself and her life came upon her; and she raised her eyes helplessly to heaven. Thus looking up she saw a statue of the Blessed Virgin which ornamented the exterior of the church. At once she rose to her knees and began to implore the intercession of Mary: "Mary, thou Refuge of sinners, be thou my hope, since thy Son has cast me out. Pray for me and he will no longer refuse me but will receive me in pity. To whom can I turn if not to thee, thou Mother of mercy?"

Tears of contrition streamed from her eyes, and she rose to try once more to enter the church. Nothing hindered her now that she had obtained the intercession of the Mother of God, the means of spiritual life.

She, who had not been permitted even to enter into a temple of stone, through the grace of the Blessed Virgin became herself a temple of the Holy Ghost. She who had been one of the greatest of sinners became a model of true penance and at last a saint. At present there is a chapel in honor of St. Mary of Egypt, near that same church to which she was once denied entrance.

Prayer.

Behold, O Mother of my God, my only hope, Mary, behold at thy feet a miserable sinner, who asks thee for mercy. Thou art proclaimed and called by the whole Church, and by all the faithful, the Refuge of sinners. Thou art consequently my refuge; thou hast to save me. I will say with William of Paris, Thou knowest, most sweet Mother of God, how much thy blessed Son desires our salvation. Thou knowest all that Jesus Christ endured for this end.

I present thee, O my Mother, the sufferings of Jesus: the cold that he endured in the stable, his journey into Egypt, his toils, his sweat, the blood that he shed; the anguish which caused his death on the cross, and of which thou wast thyself a witness. O, show that thou lovest thy beloved Son, and by this love I implore thee to assist me. Extend thy hand to a poor creature who has fallen and asks thy help. Jesus wills that I should have recourse to thee, in order not only that his blood may save me, but also that thy prayers may assist me in this great work; for thy glory, and for his own, since thou art his Mother. He sends me to thee, that thou mayest help me. O Mary, see, I have recourse to thee; in thee do I confide. Thou prayest for so many others, pray also for me; say only a word. Tell Our Lord that thou willest my salvation, and God will certainly save me. Say that I am thine, and then I have obtained all that I ask, all that I desire.

II.

Mary is also our Life, because she obtains for us Perseverance.

Final perseverance is so great a gift of God that, as it was declared by the holy Council of Trent, it is quite gratuitous on his part, and we cannot *merit* it. Yet we are told by St. Augustine that all who seek for it obtain it from God. Now, if it is true that all the graces that God dispenses to men pass through the hands of Mary, it will be equally true that it is only through Mary

that we can hope for this greatest of all graces—perseverance. And we shall obtain it most certainly, if we always seek it with confidence through Mary. In order that we may be preserved in the life of grace, we require spiritual fortitude to resist the many enemies of our salvation. Now this fortitude can be obtained by the means of Mary. Mary is that tower spoken of in the sacred Canticles: *Thy neck is as the tower of David, which is built with bulwarks; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armor of valiant men.* She is as a well-defended fortress in defence of her lovers, who in their wars have recourse to her. In her do her clients find all shields and arms, to defend themselves against hell. Truly are those souls to be pitied who abandon this defence, in ceasing their devotion to Mary, and no longer recommending themselves to her in the time of danger. "If the sun ceased to rise," says St. Bernard, "how could the world become other than a chaos of darkness and horror?" When a soul loses devotion to Mary, it is immediately enveloped in darkness, and in that darkness of which the Holy Ghost speaks in the Psalms: *Thou hast appointed darkness, and it is night; in it shall all the beasts of the woods go about.*

St. Francis Borgia always doubted the perseverance of those in whom he did not find particu-

lar devotion to the Blessed Virgin. On one occasion he questioned some novices as to the saints towards whom they had special devotion, and perceiving some who had it not towards Mary, he instantly warned the master of novices, and desired him to keep a more attentive watch over these unfortunate young men, who all, as he had feared, lost their vocation and renounced the religious state. It was, then, not without reason that St. Germanus called the most blessed Virgin the breath of Christians; for as the body cannot live without breathing, so the soul cannot live without having recourse to and recommending itself to Mary, by whose means we certainly acquire and preserve the life of divine grace within our souls.

On the other hand, Mary says in the following words of the Book of Proverbs, which are applied to her by the Church: *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors*—as if she would say, Blessed is he that hears my voice and is constantly attentive to apply at the door of my mercy, and seeks light and help from me. For clients who do this, Mary does her part, and obtains them the light and strength they require to abandon sin and walk in the paths of virtue. For this reason Innocent III. beautifully calls

her "the moon at night, the dawn at break of day, and the sun at midday." In the Book of Proverbs we are told that all Mary's clients are clothed with double garments. *For all her domestics are clothed with double garments.* Cornelius à Lapide explains what this double clothing is; he says that it "consists in her adorning her faithful servants with the virtues of her Son and with her own;" and thus clothed they persevere in virtue. Therefore St. Philip Neri, in his exhortations to his penitents, used always to say: "My children, if you desire perseverance, be devout to our blessed Lady." The Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus used also to say: "Whoever loves Mary will have perseverance."

O, did all men but love this most benign and loving Lady, had they but recourse to her always, and without delay, in their temptations, who would fall? who would ever be lost? He falls and is lost who has not recourse to Mary. "We," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "need only, when tempted by the devil, imitate little chickens, which, as soon as they perceive the approach of a bird of prey, run under the wings of their mother for protection." Let us then conclude in the words of St. Bernard: "O man, whoever thou art, understand that in this world thou art tossed about on a stormy and tempestuous sea, rather

than walking on solid ground; remember that if thou wouldst avoid being drowned, thou must never turn thine eyes from the brightness of this star, but keep them fixed on it, and call on Mary. In dangers, in straits, in doubts, remember Mary, invoke Mary. Yes, in dangers of sinning, when molested by temptations, when doubtful as to how you should act, remember that Mary can help you; and call upon her, and she will instantly succor you. "Let not her name leave thy lips, let it be ever in thy heart." Your hearts should never lose confidence in her holy name, nor should your lips ever cease to invoke it. "Following her, thou wilt certainly not go astray." O, no, if we follow Mary, we shall never err from the paths of salvation. "Imploring her, thou wilt not despair." Each time that we invoke her aid, we shall be inspired with perfect confidence. "If she supports thee, thou canst not fall;" "if she protects thee thou hast nothing to fear, for thou canst not be lost;" "with her for thy guide, thou wilt not be weary, for thy salvation will be worked out with ease." "If she is propitious, thou wilt gain the port." If Mary undertakes our defence, we are certain of gaining the kingdom of heaven. *This do, and thou shalt live.*

Example.

St. Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, who lived in the fourth century of the Christian era, was worthy of being counted among the saints because of her great virtues. Indeed, she deserves a high rank among the saints because of the evidences she has left us of her devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Father Paulinus tells that she was converted even before her son, and that to her piety and constant prayers his conversion may be ascribed. Nicephorus tells us further that this pious princess made a pilgrimage to Nazareth and built a beautiful church in honor of Jesus and Mary amidst the scenes made memorable by their presence when on earth. She also built a church in Bethlehem and one in the valley of Josaphat, on the site of the holy tomb where the glorious body of the Queen of heaven rested until it was transported to heaven. In Naples also there is a church built by St. Helena in honor of Mary and dedicated by the holy Pontiff Sylvester. Indeed it would take too long to tell of all places where St. Helena left noble evidences of her devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

Prayer.

O compassionate Mother, most sacred Virgin, behold me at thy feet! If thou protectest me, what can I fear? I only fear lest, in my temptations and by my own fault, I may cease to recommend myself to thee and thus be lost. But I now promise thee that I will always have recourse to thee. O, help me to fulfil my promise. Lose not the opportunity which now presents itself of gratifying thy ardent desire to succor such poor wretches as myself. In thee, O Mother of God, I have unbounded con-

fidence. From thee I hope for grace to bewail my sins as I ought, and from thee I hope for strength never again to fall into them. If I am sick, thou, O celestial physician, canst heal me. If my sins have weakened me, thy help will strengthen me. O Mary, I hope all from thee; for thou art all-powerful with God. Amen.

III.

Mary our Sweetness; she renders Death Sweet to her Clients.

O, how great are the sufferings of the dying! They suffer from remorse of conscience on account of past sins, from fear of the approaching judgment, and from the uncertainty of their eternal salvation. Then it is that hell arms itself and spares no efforts to gain the soul which is on the point of entering eternity; for it knows that only a short time remains in which to gain it, and that if it then loses it, it has lost it forever. *The devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time.* (Apoc. xii. 12.) And for this reason the enemy of our salvation, whose charge it was to tempt the soul during life, does not choose at death to be alone, but calls others to his assistance, according to the prophet Isaias: *Their houses shall be filled with serpents.* (Is. xii. 21.)

Ah, how quickly do the rebellious spirits fly

from the presence of this Queen! If at the hour of death we have only the protection of Mary, what need we fear from all our infernal enemies? David, fearing the horrors of death, encouraged himself by placing his reliance on the death of the coming Redeemer and on the intercession of the Virgin Mother. *For though,* he says, *I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, . . . thy rod and thy staff, they have comforted me.* (Ps. xxii. 4.) Cardinal Hugo, explaining these words of the royal prophet, says that the staff signifies the cross, and the rod is the intercession of Mary; for she is the rod foretold by the prophet Isaias: *And there shall come forth a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall rise up out of his root.* (Is. xi. 1.) "This divine Mother," says St. Peter Damian, "is that powerful rod with which the violence of the infernal enemies is conquered." And therefore does St. Antoninus encourage us, saying, "If Mary is for us, who shall be against us?" St. Vincent Ferrer says that not only does the most blessed Virgin console and refresh them, but that "she receives the souls of the dying." This loving Queen takes them under her mantle, and thus presents them to the Judge, her Son, and most certainly obtains their salvation. Father Suarez, in consequence of his devotion to Mary, which was such that he used to say

that he would willingly exchange all his learning for the merit of a single "Hail Mary," died with such peace and joy that in that moment he said "I could not have thought that death was so sweet;" meaning that he could never have imagined that it was possible, if he had not then experienced it, that he could have found such sweetness in death.

You, devout reader, will, without doubt, experience the same joy and contentment in death, if you can then remember that you have loved this good mother, who cannot be otherwise than faithful to her children who have been faithful in serving and honoring her, by their visits, rosaries, and fasts, and still more by frequently thanking and praising her, and often recommending themselves to her powerful protection. Nor will this consolation be withheld, even if you have been for a time a sinner, provided that, from this day, you are careful to live well, and to serve this most gracious and benign Lady. In your pains, and in the temptations to despair which the devil will send you, she will console you, and even come herself to assist you in your last moments.

Let us then be of good heart, though we be sinners, and feel certain that Mary will come and assist us at death, and comfort and console us with

her presence, provided only that we serve her with love during the remainder of the time that we have to be in this world. Our Queen, one day addressing St. Matilda, promised that she would assist all her clients at death who, during their lives, had faithfully served her. "I, as a most tender Mother, will faithfully be present at the death of all who piously serve me, and will console and protect them." O God, what a consolation will it be at that last moment of our lives, when our eternal lot has so soon to be decided, to see the Queen of heaven assisting and consoling us with the assurance of her protection.

Example.

At Madrid in Spain the leader of a revolutionary band was being led to the place of execution to be shot to death. His eyes were bandaged, he was kneeling, and the soldiers had even placed their guns in position waiting the order to fire, when the Angelus rang out. It is a law in Spain that no one may be executed during the ringing of the Angelus. So the soldiers put down their guns, and the condemned man employed his respite of a few minutes to pray devoutly to Mary. And to these few moments of prayer he owed his life, for when the soldiers raised their guns again a royal officer was seen galloping towards the place of execution waving a white cloth as a signal of reprieve. The rebel had to promise to leave Spain and never again to take arms against the queen, and on these conditions his life was spared.

Prayer.

O Mary, in the blood of Jesus, and in thy intercession, is all my hope. Thou art the Queen of heaven, the Mistress of the universe; in short, thou art the Mother of God. O Comfortress of the afflicted, console a poor creature who recommends himself to thee. The remorse of a conscience overburdened with sins fills me with affliction. If thou dost not help me, I am lost. O compassionate Virgin, console me; obtain for me true sorrow for my sins; obtain for me strength to amend and to be faithful to God during the rest of my life. And finally, when I am in the last agonies of death, O Mary, my hope, abandon me not; then more than ever help and encourage me that I may not despair at the sight of my sins, which the evil one will then place before me. O, sweet Mother, I hope to have the consolation of remaining always at thy feet in heaven, thanking and blessing and loving thee eternally. O Mary, I shall expect thee at my last hour; deprive me not of this consolation. Amen, amen.

CHAPTER III.

Spes nostra! Salve.

MARY, OUR HOPE.

I.

Mary is the Hope of All.

MODERN heretics cannot endure that we should salute and call Mary our hope: "Hail, our Hope!" They say that God alone is our hope; and that he curses those who put their trust in creatures in these words of the prophet Jeremias: *Cursed be the man that trusteth in man.* (Jer. xvii. 5.) Mary, they exclaim, is a creature; and how can a creature be our hope? This is what the heretics say; but in spite of this, the holy Church obliges all ecclesiastics and religious each day to raise their voices, and in the name of all the faithful invoke and call Mary by the sweet name of "our Hope"—the hope of all.

The angelical Doctor St. Thomas says that we can place our hope in a person in two ways: as a principal cause, and as a mediate one. Those who hope for a favor from a king, hope it from

him as lord; they hope for it from his minister or favorite as an intercessor. If the favor is granted, it comes primarily from the king, but it comes through the instrumentality of the favorite; and in this case he who seeks the favor is right in calling his intercessor his hope. The King of heaven, being infinite goodness, desires in the highest degree to enrich us with his graces; but because confidence is requisite on our part, and in order to increase it in us, he has given us his own Mother to be our Mother and advocate, and to her he has given all power to help us; and therefore he wills that we should repose our hope of salvation and of every blessing in her. Those who place their hopes in creatures alone, independently of God, as sinners do, and in order to obtain the friendship and favor of a man, fear not to outrage his divine Majesty, are most certainly cursed by God, as the prophet Jeremias says. But those who hope in Mary, as Mother of God, who is able to obtain graces and eternal life for them, are truly blessed and acceptable to the heart of God, who desires to see that greatest of his creatures honored; for she loved and honored him in this world more than all men and angels put together. And therefore we justly and reasonably call the Blessed Virgin our hope, trusting, as Cardinal Bellarmine says, "that we shall

obtain, through her intercession, that which we should not obtain by our own unaided prayers." "We pray to her," says the learned Suarez, "in order that the dignity of the intercessor may supply for our own unworthiness; so that," he continues, "to implore the Blessed Virgin in such a spirit is not diffidence in the mercy of God, but fear of our own unworthiness."

It is, then, not without reason that the holy Church, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, call Mary *the Mother of holy hope.* (Ecclus. xxiv. 24.) She is the Mother who gives birth to holy hope in our hearts; not to the hope of the vain and transitory goods of this life, but of the immense and eternal goods of heaven.

"Hail, then, O hope of my soul!" exclaims St. Ephrem, addressing this divine Mother; "hail, O certain salvation of Christians; hail, O helper of sinners; hail, fortress of the faithful and salvation of the world!" Other saints remind us that after God, our only hope is Mary; and therefore they call her, "after God, their only hope."

St. Germanus, recognizing in Mary the source of all our good, and that she delivers us from every evil, thus invokes her: "O, my sovereign Lady, thou alone art the one whom God has appointed to be my solace here below; thou art the guide of my pilgrimage, the strength of my

weakness, the riches of my poverty, remedy for the healing of my wounds, the soother of my pains, the end of my captivity, the hope of my salvation! Hear my prayers, have pity on my tears, I conjure thee, O thou who art my queen, my refuge, my love, my help, my hope, and my strength."

St. Ephrem, reflecting on the present order of Providence, by which God wills (as St. Bernard says, and as we shall prove at length) that all who are saved should be saved by the means of Mary, thus addresses her: "O Lady, cease not to watch over us; preserve and guard us under the wings of thy compassion and mercy, for, after God, we have no hope but in thee." St. Thomas of Villanova repeats the same thing, calling her "our only refuge, help, and asylum." St. Bernard seems to give the reason for this when he says, "See, O man, the designs of God—designs by which he is able to dispense his mercy more abundantly to us; for, desiring to redeem the whole human race, he has placed the whole price of redemption in the hands of Mary that she may dispense it at will."

We need not, then, be surprised that St. Antoninus applies the following verse of the Book of Wisdom to Mary: *Now all good things came to me together with her.* (Wisd. vii. 11.) For as this

Blessed Virgin is the Mother and dispenser of all good things, the whole world, and more particularly each individual who lives in it as a devout client of this great Queen, may say with truth that with devotion to Mary, both he and the world have obtained everything good and perfect. And Blessed Raymond Jordano also says "that every good, every help, every grace that men have received and will receive from God until the end of time, came, and will come, to them by the intercession and through the hands of Mary." Therefore St. Bonaventure says: "That we ought all to keep our eyes constantly fixed on Mary's hands, that through them we may receive the graces that we desire."

O, how many who were once proud have become humble by devotion to Mary! how many who were passionate have become meek! how many in the midst of darkness have found light! how many who were in despair have found confidence! how many who were lost have found salvation by the same powerful means! And this she clearly foretold in the house of Elizabeth, in her own sublime canticle: *Behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* And St. Bernard, interpreting her words, says: "All generations call thee blessed, because thou hast given life and glory to all nations, for in

thee sinners find pardon, and the just perseverance in the grace of God."

O God, how tender are the sentiments of confidence expressed by the enamored St. Bonaventure towards Jesus our most loving Redeemer, and Mary our most loving advocate! He says, "Whatever God foresees to be my lot, I know that he cannot refuse himself to any one who loves him and seeks for him with his whole heart. I will embrace him with my love; and if he does not bless me, I will still cling to him so closely that he will be unable to go without me. If I can do nothing else, at least I will hide myself in his wounds, and taking up my dwelling there, it will be in himself alone that he will find me." And the saint concludes, "If my Redeemer rejects me on account of my sins, and drives me from his sacred feet, I will cast myself at those of his beloved Mother Mary, and there I will remain prostrate until she has obtained my forgiveness; for this Mother of mercy knows not, and has never known, how to do otherwise than compassionate the miserable, and comply with the desires of the most destitute who fly to her for succor; and therefore," he says, "if not by duty, at least by compassion, she will engage her Son to pardon me."

Example.

At the beginning of the fifth century a damnable heresy originated in Constantinople. This heresy, which was publicly preached by Nestorius, the unworthy patriarch of Constantinople, particularly attacked the honor and glory of the Blessed Virgin. Nestorius taught that there were two persons in Christ, a divine and a human, and therefore Mary must not be called Mother of God, as she was only the mother of the human person. This blasphemous assertion outraged the faith and piety of the people and there was a general protest against this new doctrine. St. Cyril, patriarch of Alexandria, was one of the most earnest defenders of the Blessed Virgin. Chiefly through his exertions Pope Celestin caused a Church council to convene at Ephesus. Here in a short time over two hundred bishops assembled, and moreover they met for council in a church dedicated to the holy Mother of God, and bearing her name. The session began early in the morning and lasted until late at night, and the people gathered in front of the church even at dawn of day and waited with singular patience until the decision was announced. When it was at last announced that the council had pronounced against Nestorius the joy of the people knew no bounds. The bishops were escorted to their dwelling-places by the most distinguished men of the city bearing torches. Women and children preceded the procession with vessels containing incense and other costly Oriental perfumes. Hymns in praise of Mary rose from thousands of throats. The heresy had been uprooted, and the whole Church gave thanks that the glory of Mary was vindicated.

Prayer.

O Mother of holy love, our life, our refuge, and our hope, thou well knowest that thy Son Jesus Christ, not content with being himself our perpetual advocate with the Eternal Father, has willed that thou also shouldst interest thyself with him in order to obtain the divine mercies for us. He has decreed that thy prayers should aid our salvation, and has made them so efficacious that they obtain all that they ask. To thee, therefore, who art the hope of the miserable, do I, a wretched sinner, turn my eyes. My confidence in thee is such that if my eternal salvation were in my own hands, I should place it in thine, for I rely more on thy mercy and protection than on all my own works. My Mother and my hope, abandon me not, though I deserve that thou shouldst do so. I own that I have too often closed my heart, by my sins, against the lights and helps that thou hast procured for me from the Lord. But thy compassion for the miserable, and thy power with God, far surpass the number and malice of my sins. O Mary, I trust in thee; in this hope I live; in it I desire and hope to die, repeating always, "Jesus is my only hope, and after Jesus the Most Blessed Virgin Mary."

II.

Mary is the Hope of Sinners.

One of the titles which is the most encouraging to poor sinners, and under which the Church teaches us to invoke Mary in the Litany of Loretto, is that of "Refuge of sinners." In Judea in ancient times there were cities of refuge in

which criminals who fled there for protection were exempt from the punishments which they had deserved. Nowadays these cities are not so numerous; there is but one, and that is Mary, of whom the Psalmist says: *Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God.* (Ps. lxxxvi. exc. 17.) But this city differs from the ancient ones in this respect—that in the latter all kinds of criminals did not find refuge, nor was the protection extended to every class of crime; but under the mantle of Mary all sinners, without exception, find refuge for every sin that they have committed, provided only that they go there to seek for this protection. "I am the city of refuge," says St. John Damascene, in the name of our Queen, "to all who fly to me." And it is sufficient to have recourse to her, for whoever has the good fortune to enter this city need not speak to be saved. *Assemble yourselves, and let us enter into the fenced city, and let us be silent there* (Jer. viii. 14), to speak in the words of the prophet Jeremias. "This city," says Blessed Albert the Great, "is the most holy Virgin fenced in with grace and glory." "And let us be silent there," that is, continues an interpreter, "because we dare not invoke the Lord, whom we have offended, she will invoke and ask." For if we do not presume to ask Our Lord to forgive us, it will suffice to

enter this city and be silent, for Mary will speak and ask all that we require. And for this reason a devout author exhorts all sinners to take refuge under the mantle of Mary, exclaiming, "Fly, O Adam and Eve, and all you their children, who have outraged God; fly, and take refuge in the bosom of this good Mother. Know you not that she is our only city of refuge?" "the only hope of sinners?" as she is also called in a sermon by an ancient writer, found in the works of St. Augustine.

Let us then cry out with St. Thomas of Villanova, "O Mary, we poor sinners know no other refuge than thee, for thou art our only hope, and on thee we rely for our salvation." Thou art our only advocate with Jesus Christ; to thee we all turn ourselves.

In the revelations of St. Bridget, Mary is called the "Star preceding the sun," giving us thereby to understand that when devotion towards the divine Mother begins to manifest itself in a soul that is in a state of sin, it is a certain mark that before long God will enrich it with his grace. The glorious St. Bonaventure, in order to revive the confidence of sinners in the protection of Mary, places before them the picture of a tempestuous sea, into which sinners have already fallen from the ship of divine grace;

they are already dashed about on every side by remorse of conscience and by fear of the judgments of God; they are without light or guide, and are on the point of losing the last breath of hope and falling into despair; then it is that Our Lord, pointing out Mary to them, who is commonly called the "Star of the Sea," raises his voice and says, "O poor lost sinners, despair not; raise up your eyes and cast them on this beautiful star; breathe again with confidence, for it will save you from this tempest, and will guide you into the port of salvation." St. Bernard says the same thing: "If thou wouldst not be lost in the tempest, cast thine eyes on the star and invoke Mary."

St. Ephrem, addressing this Blessed Virgin, says, "Thou art the only advocate of sinners, and of all who are unprotected." And then he salutes her in the following words: "Hail, refuge and hospital of sinners!"—true refuge, in which alone they can hope for reception and liberty.

The devout Blosius declares that "she is the only refuge of those who have offended God, the asylum of all who are oppressed by temptation, calamity, or persecution. This Mother is all mercy, benignity, and sweetness, not only to the just, but also to despairing sinners; so that no sooner does she perceive them coming to her, and

seeking her health from their hearts, than she aids them, welcomes them, and obtains their pardon from her Son. She knows not how to despise any one, however unworthy he may be of mercy, and therefore denies her protection to none; she consoles all, and is no sooner called upon than she helps whoever it may be that invokes her. She by her sweetness often awakens and draws sinners to her devotion who are the most at enmity with God and the most deeply plunged in the lethargy of sin; and then, by the same means, she excites them effectually, and prepares them for grace, and thus renders them fit for the kingdom of heaven. God has created this his beloved daughter of so compassionate and sweet a disposition that no one can fear to have recourse to her."

Basil of Seleucia encourages sinners, saying, "O sinner, be not discouraged, but have recourse to Mary in all thy necessities; call her to thine assistance, for thou wilt always find her ready to help thee; for such is the divine will that she should help all in every kind of necessity." It was, then, not without reason that St. Bernard addressed the Blessed Virgin, saying, "Thou, O Lady, dost not reject any sinner who approaches thee, however loathsome and repugnant he may be. If he asks thy assistance, thou dost not dis-

dain to extend thy compassionate hand to him, to extricate him from the gulf of despair." May our God be eternally blessed and thanked, O most amiable Mary, for having created thee so sweet and benign, even towards the most miserable sinners! Truly unfortunate is he who loves thee not, and who, having it in his power to obtain thy assistance, has no confidence in thee.

Example.

The holy house of Nazareth, in which the angel Gabriel announced to the most blessed among women her high destiny, in which Jesus spent the years of his childhood and his youth in humble and obscure work with Joseph and Mary, has not only been preserved for our time, but has been miraculously transported to within reach of the thousands and thousands of pilgrims whose faith has urged and still urges them to visit Loretto. St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, came to Nazareth in the year 325. After she had located the holy house she built a beautiful temple over it. Even in the year 1252 Louis IX., the sainted king of France, visited this church and received communion there. When, about the middle of April in 1291, Ptolemy, the last Christian stronghold, was lost to the Greeks, the holy house, as once the holy cross, was destined to be taken out of the power of the infidels and restored to the faithful. On May 9, 1291, the holy house, with the altar, crucifix, statue of the Blessed Virgin, and other articles contained in it disappeared suddenly from Nazareth. Carried miraculously through the air, it first descended to earth in Dalmatia, between Tersato

and Fiume, on the coast of the Adriatic, opposite Italy. The Blessed Virgin herself revealed to the priest of the place, who was lying mortally ill, that the house standing without foundation and built after a strange fashion was her house of Nazareth, and to attest its miraculous identity the priest was to recover his health. After three years and seven months the holy house was carried across the Adriatic Sea to the Italian coast by angels and placed in a laurel grove in a Picenian district, near Recanati. On the 7th of September, 1295, the same unseen hands raised the holy house and carried it to the public highway about one thousand feet from its last resting-place, and here it still stands. Many investigations and daily miracles attest that this is really the house of the Holy Family at Nazareth.

Prayer.

O most pure Virgin Mary, I venerate thy most holy heart, which was the delight and resting-place of God, thy heart overflowing with humility, purity, and divine love. I, an unhappy sinner, approach thee with a heart all loathsome and wounded. For the love of Jesus, take charge of my salvation. Through thee do I hope for salvation. I ask not for riches, honors, or earthly goods. I seek only the grace of God, love towards thy Son, the accomplishment of his will, and his heavenly kingdom, that I may love him eternally. Is it possible that thou wilt not hear me? No; for already thou hast granted my prayer, as I hope; already thou prayest for me; already thou obtainest me the graces that I ask; already thou takest me under thy protection. My Mother, abandon me not. Never, never cease to pray for me, until thou seest me safe in heaven at thy feet, blessing and thanking thee forever. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

Ad te clamamus, exules filii Evæ.

TO THEE DO WE CRY, POOR BANISHED CHILDREN OF EVE.

MARY, OUR HELP.

I.

The Promptitude of Mary in assisting those who invoke her.

TRULY unfortunate are we poor children of Eve; for guilty before God of her fault, and condemned to the same penalty, we have to wander about in this valley of tears as exiles from our country, and to weep over our many afflictions of body and soul. But blessed is he who, in the midst of these sorrows, often turns to the Comfortress of the world, to the Refuge of the unfortunate, to the great Mother of God, and devoutly calls upon her and invokes her! *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates.* (Prov. viii. 34.) "Blessed," says Mary, "is he who listens to my counsels, and watches continually at the gate of my mercy, and invokes my intercession and aid."

The holy Church carefully teaches us her children with what attention and confidence we should unceasingly have recourse to this loving protectress; and for this purpose commands a worship peculiar to Mary. And not only this, but she has instituted so many festivals that are celebrated throughout the year in honor of this great Queen: she devotes one day in the week, in an especial manner, to her honor: in the divine office all ecclesiastics and religious are daily obliged to invoke her in the name of all Christians; and, finally, she desires that all the faithful should salute this most holy Mother of God three times a day, at the sound of the Angelus-bell. And that we may understand the confidence that the holy Church has in Mary, we need only remember that in all public calamities she invariably invites all to have recourse to the protection of this divine Mother, by novenas, prayers, processions, by visiting the churches dedicated in her honor, and her images. We often obtain more promptly what we ask by calling on the name of Mary than by invoking that of Jesus. Her Son is Lord and Judge of all, and discerns the merits of each one; and therefore if he does not immediately grant the prayers of all, he is just. When, however, the Mother's name is invoked, though the merits of the suppliant

are not such as to deserve that his prayer should be granted, those of the Mother supply that he may receive. St. Bonaventure remarks that Ruth, whose name signifies "seeing and hastening," was a figure of Mary; "for Mary, seeing our miseries, hastens in her mercy to succor us." Novarinus adds that "Mary, in the greatness of her desire to help us, cannot admit of delay, for she is in no way an avaricious guardian of the graces she has at her disposal as Mother of mercy, and cannot do otherwise than immediately shower down the treasures of her liberality on her servants." The compassion of Mary is poured out on every one who asks it, even should it be sought for by no other prayer than a simple "Hail Mary." Wherefore Novarinus declares that the Blessed Virgin not only runs but flies to assist him who invokes her. "She," says this author, "in the exercise of her mercy, knows not how to act differently from God; for, as he flies at once to the assistance of those who beg his aid, faithful to his promise, *Ask, and you shall receive* (John xvi. 24), so Mary, whenever she is invoked, is at once ready to assist him who prays to her."

Mary, even when living in this world, showed at the marriage-feast of Cana the great compassion that she would afterwards exercise towards us in our necessities, and which now, as it were,

forces her to have pity on us and assist us, even before we ask her to do so. In the second chapter of St. Luke we read that at this feast the compassionate Mother saw the embarrassment in which the bride and bridegroom were, and that they were quite ashamed on seeing the wine fail; and therefore, without being asked, and listening only to the dictates of her compassionate heart, which could never behold the afflictions of others without feeling for them, she begged her Son to console them simply by laying their distress before him: *they have no wine.* (John ii. 3.) No sooner had she done so than Our Lord, in order to satisfy all present, and still more to console the compassionate heart of his Mother, who had asked the favor, worked the well-known miracle by which he changed the water, brought to him in jars, into wine. From this Novarinus argues that "if Mary, unasked, is thus prompt to succor the needy, how much more so will she be to succor those who invoke her and ask for her help?"

Should there be any one who doubts as to whether Mary will aid him if he has recourse to her, Innocent III. thus reproves him: "Who is there that ever, when in the night of sin, had recourse to this sweet Lady without being relieved?"

Example.

We read in the life of St. Francis de Sales that he experienced the efficacy of the Memorare. When he was about seventeen years of age he was living in Paris, where he was pursuing his studies. At the same time he devoted himself to exercises of piety and to the holy love of God, in which he found the joys of paradise. Our Lord, in order to try him, and to strengthen the bands which united him to himself, allowed the evil spirit to persuade him that all that he did was in vain, as he was already condemned in the eternal decrees of God. The darkness and spiritual dryness in which God was pleased at the same time to leave him, for he was then insensible to all the sweeter thoughts of the goodness of God, caused the temptation to have greater power over the heart of the holy youth; and indeed it reached such a pitch that his fears and interior desolation took away his appetite, deprived him of sleep, made him pale and melancholy; so much so that he excited the compassion of all who saw him.

As long as this terrible storm lasted, the saint could only conceive thoughts and utter words of despondency and bitter grief. "Then," said he, "I am to be deprived of the grace of my God, who hitherto has shown himself so lovely and sweet to me! O love, O beauty, to which I have consecrated all my affections, I am no longer to enjoy thy consolation! O Virgin, Mother of God, the fairest amongst all the daughters of Jerusalem, then I am never to see thee in heaven! Ah, Lady, if I am not to behold thy beautiful countenance in paradise, at least permit me not to blaspheme thee in hell!" Such were the tender sentiments of that afflicted but at the same time loving heart. The temptation had lasted a month, when it pleased Our Lord to de-

liver him by the means of that Comfortress of the world, the most blessed Mary, to whom the saint had some time before consecrated his virginity, and in whom, as he declared, he had placed all his hopes. One evening on returning home he entered a church and saw a tablet hanging on the wall. He read it and found the following well-known prayer, commonly called "the prayer of St. Bernard"; "Remember, O most pious Virgin Mary, that it never has been heard of in any age that any one having recourse to thy protection was abandoned." Falling on his knees before the altar of the divine Mother, he recited this prayer with tender fervor, renewed his vow of chastity, promised to say the rosary every day, and then added: "My Queen, be my advocate with thy Son, whom I dare not approach. My Mother, if I am so unfortunate as not to be able to love my Lord in the next world, and whom I know to be so worthy of love, at least do thou obtain that I may love him in this world as much as possible. This is the grace that I ask and hope for from thee." Having thus addressed the Blessed Virgin, he cast himself into the arms of divine mercy and resigned himself entirely to the will of God. Scarcely had he finished his prayer, when in an instant he was delivered from his temptation by his most sweet Mother. He immediately regained the peace of his soul and with it his bodily health, and from that time forward lived most devout to Mary, whose praises and mercy he constantly extolled, both in his sermons and writings, during the remainder of his life.

Prayer.

O Mother of God, Queen of angels and hope of men, give ear to one who calls upon thee and has recourse to thy protection. I desire to be forever

thy servant. I offer myself to serve and honor thee to the utmost of my power during the whole of my life. I know that the service of one so vile and miserable can be no honor to thee, since I have so grievously offended Jesus, thy Son and my Redeemer. But if thou wilt accept one so unworthy for thy servant, and by thy intercession change me, thus making me worthy, this very mercy will give thee that honor which so miserable a wretch as I can never give thee. Receive me, then, and reject me not, O my Mother. The Eternal Word came from heaven on earth to seek for lost sheep, and to save them he became thy Son. And when one of them goes to thee to find Jesus, wilt thou despise it? O then help me, my Queen; my Queen, save me. To thee do I this day consecrate my whole soul; do thou save it.

II.

The Greatness of the Power of Mary to defend those who invoke her when tempted by the Devil.

In Judea victories were gained by means of the ark. Thus it was that Moses conquered his enemies, as we learn from the Book of Numbers. *And when the ark was lifted up, Moses said: Arise, O Lord, and let Thy enemies be scattered.* (Num. x. 35.) Thus was Jericho conquered; thus also the Philistines; *for the ark of God was there.* (I. Kings xiv. 18.) It is well known that this ark was a figure of Mary. Cornelius à Lapide says: "In time of danger, Christians should fly to the

most blessed Virgin, who contained Christ as manna in the ark of her womb, and brought him forth to be the food and salvation of the world." For as manna was in the ark, so is Jesus (of whom manna was a figure) in Mary; and by means of this ark we gain the victory over our earthly and infernal enemies. "And thus," St. Bernardine of Sienna well observes, "when Mary, the ark of the New Testament, was raised to the dignity of Queen of heaven, the power of hell over men was weakened and dissolved."

"O how the infernal spirits tremble at the very thought of Mary, and of her august name!" says St. Bonaventure. "O how fearful is Mary to the devils!" The saint compares these enemies to those of whom Job speaks: *He diggeth through houses in the dark: if the morning suddenly appear, it is to them the shadow of death.* (Job xxiv. 16.) Thieves go and rob houses in the dark; but as soon as morning dawns they fly, as if they beheld the shadow of death. "Precisely thus," in the words of the same saint, "do the devils enter a soul in the time of darkness;" meaning when the soul is in the obscurity of ignorance. They dig through the house of our mind when it is in the darkness of ignorance. But then, he adds, "if suddenly they are overtaken by the dawn, that is, if the grace and mercy of Mary enters

the soul, its brightness instantly dispels the darkness and puts the infernal enemies to flight, as if they fled from death." O blessed is he who always invokes the beautiful name of Mary in his conflicts with hell!

The devils tremble even if they only hear the name of Mary. St. Bernard declares that in "the name of Mary every knee bows; and that the devils not only fear but tremble at the very sound of that name." And as men fall prostrate with fear if a thunderbolt falls near them, so do the devils if they hear the name of Mary. St. Anselm declares that he himself "knew and had seen and heard many who had invoked the name of Mary in time of danger, and were immediately delivered from it."

"Glorious indeed, and admirable," exclaims St. Bonaventure, "is thy name, O Mary; for those who pronounce it at death need not fear all the powers of hell;" for the devils on hearing that name instantly fly and leave the soul in peace. The same saint adds "that men do not fear a powerful hostile army as much as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary." "Thou, O Lady," says St. Germanus, "by the simple invocation of thy most powerful name, givest security to thy servants against all the assaults of the enemy." Oh, were Christians but

careful in their temptations to pronounce the name of Mary with confidence, never would they fall; for, as Blessed Allan remarks, "At the very sound of these words, Hail, Mary! Satan flies and hell trembles."

Example.

The holy house of Nazareth in the Cathedral at Loretto is thirty feet long, thirteen feet wide, and thirteen feet high. The walls are a good foot thick. The stones of the walls are tufa, of the kind which is used as building material at Nazareth. This has been shown by chemical examination. The inside walls, though blackened by smoke and kissed smooth in places by the faithful, have not been changed otherwise. From the old wood work of the ceiling—it is of cedar-wood—fifty-two lamps are suspended. Their light is never permitted to go out. On the western wall is the crucifix brought over from Nazareth with the holy house. In the centre of the holy house is the same altar which was in it at the time of its transportation. Silver busts of St. Joseph and St. Anne ornament the altar, and inside of it is the stone altar on which even St. Peter celebrated the holy mysteries. In the wall behind the altar is the fireplace at which the blessed Queen of heaven prepared the food for her divine Son. Over the fireplace is the ancient and wondrous image of the Mother of God with the Child Jesus. It is made out of cedar-wood and ornamented with a triple crown of precious stones, and clothed in cloths of gold, on which jewels and gold and silver ornaments are applied. This picture too came over with the holy house. The image is blackened by time, is two feet eight inches high, and the hair, after the

custom of the Nazarenes, flows unbound over the shoulders. The statue of the Child is one foot and two inches high. It rests on the arm of the Virgin and holds up the first finger as if in blessing. In the left hand there is a golden ball. The Child, too, has the hair flowing over the shoulders.

Prayer.

Behold at thy feet, O Mary my hope, a poor sinner, who has so many times been by his own fault the slave of hell. Place me under thy mantle; permit me not again to become its slave. I know that thou wilt help me and give me the victory, provided I invoke thee; but I dread lest in my temptations I may forget thee and neglect to do so. The favor, then, that I seek of thee, and which thou must grant me, O most holy Virgin, is that I may never forget thee, and especially in time of temptation; grant that I may then repeatedly invoke thee, saying, "O Mary, help me; O Mary, help me." And when my last struggle comes, at the moment of death, ah then, my Queen, help me more than ever, and thou thyself remind me to call on thee more frequently either with my lips or in my heart; that, being thus filled with confidence, I may expire with thy sweet name and that of thy Son Jesus on my lips; that so I may be able to bless thee and praise thee, and not to depart from thy feet in paradise for all eternity. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

Ad te suspiramus gementes et flentes in hac lacrymarum valle.

TO THEE DO WE SIGH, MOURNING AND WEEPING, IN THIS VALLEY OF TEARS.

Mary, our Mediatress.

I.

The Necessity of the Intercession of Mary for our Salvation.

That it is not only lawful but useful to invoke and pray to the saints, and more especially to the Queen of saints, the most holy and ever blessed Virgin Mary, in order that they may obtain us the divine grace, is an article of faith, and has been defined by General Councils, against heretics who condemned it as injurious to Jesus Christ, who is our only mediator; but if a Jeremias after his death prayed for Jerusalem (II. Mach. xv. 14); if the ancients of the Apocalypse presented the prayers of the saints to God; if a St. Peter promises his disciples that after his death he will be mindful of them; if a holy Stephen prays for his

persecutors; if a St. Paul prays for his companions; if, in fine, the saints can pray for us, why cannot we beseech the saints to intercede for us? St. Paul recommends himself to the prayers of his disciples: *Brethren, pray for us.* (I. Thess. v. 25.) St. James exhorts us to pray one for another: *Pray one for another, that you may be saved.* (James v. 16.) Then we can do the same.

No one denies that Jesus Christ is our only mediator of justice, and that he by his merits has obtained our reconciliation with God. But, on the other hand, it is impious to assert that God is not pleased to grant graces at the intercession of his saints, and more especially of Mary his Mother, whom Jesus desires so much to see loved and honored by all. Who can pretend that the honor bestowed on a mother does not redound to the honor of the son? *The glory of children are their fathers.* (Prov. xvii. 6.) Whence St. Bernard says, "Let us not imagine that we obscure the glory of the Son by the great praise we lavish on the Mother; for the more she is honored, the greater is the glory of her Son." "There can be no doubt," says the saint, "that whatever we say in praise of the Mother is equally in praise of the Son." And St. Ildephonsus also says, "That which is given to the Mother redounds to the Son; the honor given to the Queen

is honor bestowed on the King." There can be no doubt that by the merits of Jesus, Mary was made the mediatress of our salvation; not indeed a mediatress of justice, but of grace and intercession; as St. Bonaventure expressly calls her "Mary, the most faithful mediatress of our salvation." And St. Laurence Justinian asks, "How can she be otherwise than full of grace, who has been made the ladder to paradise, the gate of heaven, the most true mediatress between God and man?" Hence the learned Suarez justly remarks that if we implore our blessed Lady to obtain us a favor, it is not because we distrust the divine mercy, but rather that we fear our own unworthiness and the absence of proper dispositions; and we recommend ourselves to Mary that her dignity may supply for our lowliness.

That it is most useful and holy to have recourse to the intercession of Mary can only be doubted by those who have not faith. But that which we intend to prove here is that the intercession of Mary is even necessary to salvation; we say necessary—not absolutely, but morally. This necessity proceeds from the will itself of God, that all graces that he dispenses should pass through the hands of Mary, according to the opinion of St. Bernard, and which we may now with safety call the general opinion of theolo-

gians and learned men. The author of the *Reign of Mary* positively asserts that such is the case. It is maintained by Vega, Mendoza, Paciucchelli, Segneri, Poiré, Crasset, and by innumerable other learned authors. Even Father Natalis Alexander, who always uses so much reserve in his propositions, even he says that it is the will of God that we should expect all graces through the intercession of Mary. I will give his own words: "God wills that we should obtain all good things that we hope for from him through the powerful intercession of the Virgin Mother, and we shall obtain them whenever (as we are in duty bound) we invoke her." In confirmation of this, he quotes the following celebrated passage of St. Bernard: "Such is God's will that we should have all through Mary." Father Contenson is also of the same opinion; for, explaining the words addressed by Our Lord on the cross to St. John: *Behold thy Mother* (John xix. 27), he remarks, "That it is the same thing as if he had said: As no one can be saved except through the merits of my sufferings and death, so no one will be a partaker of the blood then shed otherwise than through the prayer of my Mother. He alone is a son of my sorrows who has Mary for his Mother. My wounds are ever-flowing fountains of grace; but their streams will reach no

one but by the channel of Mary. In vain will he invoke me as a Father who has not venerated Mary as a Mother. And thou, my disciple John, if thou lovest me, love her; for thou wilt be beloved by me in proportion to thy love for her."

This proposition, that all that we receive from Our Lord comes through Mary, does not exactly please a certain modern writer,* who, although in other respects he speaks of true and false devotion with much learning and piety, yet when he treats of devotion towards the divine Mother he seems to grudge her that glory which was given her without scruple by a St. Germanus, a St. Anselm, a St. John Damascene, a St. Bonaventure, a St. Antoninus, a St. Bernardine, the Venerable Abbot of Celles, and so many other learned men, who had no difficulty in affirming that the intercession of Mary is not only useful but necessary. The same author says that the proposition that God grants no grace otherwise than through Mary is hyperbolical and exaggerated, having dropped from the lips of some saints in the heat of fervor, but which, correctly speaking, is only to be understood as meaning that through Mary we receive Jesus Christ, by whose merits we obtain all graces; for he adds, "To believe

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* This author is the celebrated Muratori.—Ed.

that God can grant us no graces without the intercession of Mary would be contrary to faith and the doctrine of St. Paul, who says that we acknowledge but *one God and one Mediator of God and men the man Christ Jesus.*" (I. Tim. ii. 5.)

But with his leave, and going upon his own admissions, mediation of justice by way of merit is one thing, and mediation by grace by way of prayer is another. And again, it is one thing to say that God cannot, and another that he will not, grant graces without the intercession of Mary. We willingly admit that God is the source of every good, and the absolute master of all graces; and that Mary is only a pure creature, who receives whatever she obtains as a pure favor from God. But who can ever deny that it is most reasonable and proper to assert that God, in order to exalt this great creature, who more than all others honored and loved him during her life, and whom, moreover, he had chosen to be the Mother of his Son, our common Redeemer, wills that all graces that are granted to those whom he has redeemed should pass through and be dispensed by the hands of Mary? We most readily admit that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator of justice, according to the distinction just made, and that by his merits he obtains us all graces and salvation; but we say that Mary is the

mediatress of grace; and that receiving all she obtains through Jesus Christ, and because she prays and asks for it in the name of Jesus Christ, yet all the same whatever graces we receive, they come to us through her intercession.

There is certainly nothing contrary to faith in this, but the reverse. It is quite in accordance with the sentiments of the Church, which, in its public and approved prayers, teaches us continually to have recourse to this divine Mother, and to invoke her as the "health of the weak, the refuge of sinners, the help of Christians, and as our life and hope." In the Office appointed to be said on the feasts of Mary, this same holy Church, applying the words of Ecclesiasticus to this Blessed Virgin, gives us to understand that in her we find all hope. *In me is all hope of life and of virtue!* (Ecclus. xxiv. 25); in Mary is every grace. *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth* (ib.); in Mary, finally, we shall find life and eternal salvation: *Who finds me finds life, and draws salvation from the Lord.* (Prov. viii. 35.) And elsewhere: *They that work by me shall not sin; they that explain me shall have everlasting life.* (Ecclus. xxiv. 30, 31.) And surely such expressions as these sufficiently prove that we require the intercession of Mary.

Moreover, we are confirmed in this opinion by

so many theologians and Fathers, of whom it is certainly incorrect to say, as the above-named author does, that, in exalting Mary, they spoke hyperbolically and allowed great exaggerations to fall from their lips. To exaggerate and speak hyperbolically is to exceed the limits of truth; and surely we cannot say that saints who were animated by the Spirit of God, which is truth itself, spoke thus. If I may be allowed to make a short digression, and give my own sentiment, it is, that when an opinion tends in any way to the honor of the most blessed Virgin, when it has some foundation, and is not repugnant to the faith, nor to the decrees of the Church, nor to truth, the refusal to hold it, or to oppose it because the reverse may be true, shows little devotion to the Mother of God. Of the number of such as these I do not choose to be, nor do I wish my reader to be so, but rather of the number of those who fully and firmly believe all that can without error be believed of the greatness of Mary, according to the Abbot Rupert, who, amongst the acts of homage most pleasing to this good Mother, places that of firmly believing all that redounds to her honor. If there were nothing else to take away our fear of exceeding in the praises of Mary, St. Augustine should suffice; for he declares that whatever we may say in

praise of Mary is little in comparison with that which she deserves, on account of her dignity of Mother of God; and, moreover, the Church says, in the Mass appointed for her festivals, "Thou art happy, O sacred Virgin Mary, and most worthy of all praise."

But let us return to the point and examine what the saints say on the subject. St. Bernard says "that God has filled Mary with all graces, so that men may receive by her means, as by a channel, every good thing that comes to them." He says that "she is a full aqueduct that others may receive of her plenitude." On this the saint makes the following significant remark: "Before the birth of the Blessed Virgin, a constant flow of graces was wanting, because this aqueduct did not exist." But now that Mary has been given to the world, heavenly graces constantly flow through her on all.

The devil, like Holofernes, who, in order to gain possession of the city of Bethulia, ordered the aqueducts to be destroyed, exerts himself to his utmost to destroy devotion to the Mother of God in souls; for if this channel of grace is closed, he easily gains possession of them. And here, continues the same St. Bernard, "See, O souls, with what tender devotion Our Lord wills that we should honor our Queen, by always hav-

ing recourse to her protection, and by relying on it; for in Mary he has placed the plenitude of every good, so that henceforward we may know and acknowledge that whatever hope, grace, or other advantage we possess, all comes from the hand of Mary." St. Antoninus says the same thing: "All graces that have ever been bestowed on men, all came through Mary." And on this account she is called the moon, according to the following remark of St. Bonaventure: "As the moon, which stands between the sun and the earth, transmits to this latter whatever it receives from the former, so does Mary pour out upon us who are in this world the heavenly graces that she receives from the divine sun of justice."

Again, the holy Church calls her "the happy gate of heaven;" for, as the same St. Bernard remarks: "As every mandate of grace that is sent by a king passes through the palace gates, so does every grace that comes from heaven to the world pass through the hands of Mary." St. Bonaventure says that Mary is called "the gate of heaven, because no one can enter that blessed kingdom without passing through her."

An ancient author, probably St. Sophronius, in a sermon on the Assumption, published with the works of St. Jerome, says "that the plenitude of grace which is in Jesus Christ came into Mary,

though in a different way;" meaning that it is Our Lord, as in the head, from which the vital spirits (that is, divine help to obtain eternal salvation) flow into us, who are the members of his mystical body; and that the same plenitude is in Mary, as in the neck, through which these vital spirits pass to the members. The same idea is confirmed by St. Bernardine of Sienna, who explains it more clearly, saying "that all graces of the spiritual life that descend from Christ, their head, to the faithful, who are his mystical body, are transmitted through the instrumentality of Mary."

The same St. Bernardine endeavors to assign a reason for this when he says "that as God was pleased to dwell in the womb of this holy Virgin, she acquired, so to speak, a kind of jurisdiction over all graces; for when Jesus Christ issued forth from her most sacred womb, all the streams of divine gifts flowed from her as from a celestial ocean." Elsewhere, repeating the same idea in more distinct terms, he asserts that "from the moment that this Virgin Mother conceived the divine Word in her womb, she acquired a special jurisdiction, so to say, over all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, so that no creature has since received any grace from God otherwise than through the hands of Mary."

Father Crasset, in a commentary on a passage of Jeremias, in which the prophet, speaking of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word, and of Mary his Mother, says that *a woman shall compass a man* (Jer. xxxi. 22), remarks that "as no line can be drawn from the centre of a circle without passing by the circumference, so no grace proceeds from Jesus, who is the centre of every good thing, without passing by Mary, who compassed him when she received him into her womb."

St. Bernardine says that for this reason "all gifts, all virtues, and all graces are dispensed by the hands of Mary to whomsoever, when, and as she pleases." Richard of St. Laurence also asserts "that God wills that whatever good things he bestows on his creatures should pass through the hands of Mary." And therefore the Venerable Abbot of Celles exhorts all to have recourse to "this treasury of graces," for so he calls her, for the world and the whole human race have to receive every good that can be hoped for through her alone. "Address yourselves to the Blessed Virgin," he says; "for by her, and in her, and with her, and from her, the world receives, and is to receive, every good."

It must now be evident to all that when these saints and authors tell us in such terms that all graces come to us through Mary, they do not

simply mean to say that we "received Jesus Christ, the source of every good, through Mary," as the before-named writer pretends; but that they assure us that God, who gave us Jesus Christ, wills that all graces that have been, that are, and will be dispensed to men to the end of the world through the merits of Christ should be dispensed by the hands and through the intercession of Mary.

And thus Father Suarez concludes that it is the sentiment of the universal Church "that the intercession and prayers of Mary are, above those of all others, not only useful but necessary." Necessary in accordance with what we have already said, not with an absolute necessity—for the mediation of Jesus Christ alone is absolutely necessary—but with a moral necessity; for the Church believes with St. Bernard that God has determined that no grace shall be granted otherwise than by the hands of Mary. "God wills," says the saint, "that we should have nothing that has not passed through the hands of Mary;" and before St. Bernard, St. Ildephonsus asserted the same thing, addressing the Blessed Virgin in the following terms: "O Mary, God has decided on committing all good gifts that he has provided for men to thy hands, and therefore he has intrusted all treasures and riches of grace to thee."

And therefore St. Peter Damian remarks "that God would not become man without the consent of Mary; in the first place that we might feel ourselves under great obligations to her, and in the second that we might understand that the salvation of all is left to the care of this Blessed Virgin."

St. Bonaventure, in a sermon on the words of St. Matthew, *They found the child, with Mary his Mother* (Matt. ii. 2), reminds us that if we wish to find Jesus we must go to Mary. We may, then, conclude that in vain shall we seek for Jesus unless we endeavor to find him with Mary.

Example.

The Blessed Hermann of the Order of Premonstratensians, who because of his admirable devotion to Mary was called Joseph, was wont as a child to leave his playmates and spend hours before an image of the Blessed Virgin and her divine Child. He called Mary his good Mother and brought her an apple one day to give to the Child Jesus. His childish trust and simple faith won for him the happiness of having Mary really address him. Through her assistance he acquired the noble virtues which we admire so much in his life.

St. Stanislaus Kostka chose Mary to be his Mother when he was but a tender child, and up to the time of his death he was distinguished by his devotion to Mary. Day and night he carried his rosary with him. Whenever possible he tried to win others to devotion to the Blessed Mother. At the begin-

ning of August, in the year 1568, a profound desire to die filled him, particularly when contemplating how joyfully the Feast of the Assumption must be celebrated in heaven. Filled with this desire he prayed most earnestly to be permitted to be in heaven on that day. As St. Laurence was his patron for August, he wrote a letter expressing his desire to the Blessed Virgin, and then received communion on the feast of the saint, August 10th, and entreated him to make the contents of the letter known to the Blessed Virgin; and behold on the evening of the same day he became ill and died between three and four o'clock on the morning of the 15th, and was vouchsafed to participate with the angels in the joy of the glorious Assumption. Though he was only nineteen years old, he had yet attained great sanctity.

When St. Teresa was but twelve years old her mother died. Realizing in a measure her great loss she went sorrowfully to a picture of the Blessed Virgin and entreated her with tears in her eyes to be her mother now. She did this in her childish simplicity, but, as she tells us herself, she never after invoked the aid of Mary without evident answer to her prayer, and at last the Blessed Virgin converted her and took her to herself—that is the Blessed Virgin obtained for her the grace of the religious vocation and raised her to the highest heights of holiness. (Month of Mary, of P. Francis Lalomia, S.J.)

Prayer of St. Peter Damian.

Holy Virgin, Mother of God, succor those who implore thy aid, O turn towards us, turn to us in thy love. I know, O my Lady, that thou art all benign, and that thou lovest us with a love that can

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be surpassed by no other love. How often dost thou not appease the wrath of our Judge, when he is on the point of chastising us? All the treasures of the mercies of God are in thy hands. Ah, never cease to benefit us. Thou only seekest occasion to save all the wretched and to shower thy mercies upon them; for thy glory is increased when by thy means penitents are forgiven and thus reach heaven. Turn, then, towards us, that we also may be able to go and see thee in heaven; for the greatest glory we can have will be, after seeing God, to see thee, to love thee, and be under thy protection. Be pleased, then, to grant our prayer; for thy beloved Son desires to honor thee by denying thee nothing that thou askest.

II.

The same Subject continued.

St. Bernard says "that as a man and a woman coöperated in our ruin, so it was proper that another man and another woman should coöperate in our redemption, and these two were Jesus and his Mother Mary." "There is no doubt," says the saint, "that Jesus Christ alone was more than sufficient to redeem us; but it was more becoming that both sexes should coöperate in the reparation of an evil in causing which both had shared." This is confirmed by St. Anselm, who says "that although God could create the world out of nothing, yet, when it was lost by sin, he would not repair the evil without the coöperation of Mary."

Suarez says "that Mary coöperated in our salvation in three ways: first, by having merited by a merit of congruity the Incarnation of the Word; secondly, by having continually prayed for us whilst she was living in this world; thirdly, by having willingly sacrificed the life of her Son to God." For this reason Our Lord has justly decreed that as Mary coöperated in the salvation of man with so much love, and at the same time gave such glory to God, so all men through her intercession are to obtain their salvation.

And as we have access to the Eternal Father, says St. Bernard, only through Jesus Christ, so have we access to Jesus Christ only through Mary: "By thee we have access to the Son, O blessed finder of grace, bearer of life, and mother of salvation, that we may receive him by thee, who through thee was given to us." This is the reason given by the saint why Our Lord has determined that all shall be saved by the intercession of Mary; and therefore he calls her the Mother of grace and of our salvation.

"Then," asks St. Germanus, "what will become of us—what hope can we have of salvation—if thou dost abandon us, O Mary, who art the life of Christians?"

Jesus Christ says that no one can find him unless the Eternal Father first draws him by the

means of divine grace: *No one comes to me unless my Father draws him.* (John vi. 44.) Thus also does Jesus address his Mother, says Richard of St. Laurence: "No one comes to me unless my Mother first of all draws him by her prayers." Jesus was the fruit of Mary, as St. Elizabeth told her: "*Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.*" (Luke i. 42.) Whoever, therefore, desires the fruit must go to the tree; whoever desires Jesus must go to Mary; and whoever finds Mary will most certainly find Jesus.

When St. Elizabeth saw that the most blessed Virgin had come to visit her in her own house, not knowing how to thank her, and filled with humility, she exclaimed: *And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should visit me?* (Ib. 43.) But how could this be? we may ask. Did not St. Elizabeth already know that not only Mary, but also Jesus, had entered her house? Why then does she say that she is unworthy to receive the Mother, and not rather that she is unworthy to receive the Son, who had come to visit her? Ah, yes, it was that the saint knew full well that when Mary comes she brings Jesus, and therefore it was sufficient to thank the Mother without naming the Son.

Therefore Richard of St. Laurence had good

reason for saying that "as we should fall into the abyss if the ground were withdrawn from under our feet, so does a soul deprived of the succor of Mary first fall into sin, and then into hell." St. Bonaventure says that "God will not save us without the intercession of Mary;" and that "as a child cannot live without a nurse to suckle it, so no one can be saved without the protection of Mary." Therefore he exhorts us "to thirst after devotion to her, to preserve it with care, and never to abandon it until we have received her maternal blessing in heaven." Let us, then, in the words of St. Bernard, "endeavor to venerate this divine Mother with the whole affection of our hearts; for such is the will of God, who is pleased that we should receive every good thing from her hand." And therefore the saint exhorts us, whenever we desire or ask for any grace, to recommend ourselves to Mary, and to be assured that we shall receive it by her means; for he says, If thou dost not deserve the favor from God, Mary, who will ask it for thee, will deserve to receive it; "because thou wast unworthy of the gift, it was bestowed on Mary, that through her thou mightest receive all that thou hast." The saint then advises us to recommend all that we offer to God to the care of Mary, be they good works or prayers, if we wish Our Lord to accept them. "Whatever thou mayest

offer to God, be sure to recommend it to Mary, in order not to meet with a repulse."

Example.

St. Peter Damian lived at a time of which it might be said with truth that all flesh was seeking its own destruction. Moved by divine inspiration to oppose this sad tendency, St. Peter Damian tried to restore faith in the help of Mary. With the sanction of the Holy Father, he introduced the pious custom of praying especially to Mary at different times of the day. A wonderful thing happened in this connection, and is related by St. Damian, who was himself one of the eye-witnesses. The monks of the monastery at Gonurgei had been in the habit of saying these prayers to Mary for about three years, when one of them named Gozon, who concealed an unreligious mind under a religious habit, began to find fault with these devotions, saying that it was enough to read the office ordered by St. Benedict without adding to it prayers invented by people who were trying to win the reputation of holiness at the expense of others. This speech made such an impression on his brethren that they decided to drop the devotions to Mary. But wonderful are the decrees of God! No sooner had they come to this decision than they were assailed by troubles on all sides. Soldiers and robbers seized some of their lands. Some of their buildings burned down, people were assassinated on their lands, and at last they themselves began to quarrel and quibble. So much misery opened their eyes, and they sent for St. Damian and asked counsel of him. He at once told them to resume their suspended devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Soon their miseries vanished and peace,

prosperity, and unity returned to their house. They had learned how well it is to live under the protection of the Queen of heaven and how much sorrow awaits those who leave it.

Prayer.

O Queen and Mother of mercy, who dispensest graces to all who have recourse to thee with so much liberality, because thou art a Queen, and with so much love, because thou art our most loving Mother; to thee do I, who am so devoid of merit and virtue, and so loaded with debts to the divine justice, recommend myself this day. O Mary, thou holdest the keys of all the divine mercies; forget not my miseries, and leave me not in my poverty. Thou art so liberal with all, and givest more than thou art asked for, O be thus liberal with me. O Lady, protect me; this is all that I ask of thee. If thou protectest me, I fear nothing. I fear not the evil spirits; for thou art more powerful than all of them. I fear not my sins; for thou by one word canst obtain their full pardon from God. And if I have thy favor, I do not even fear an angry God; for a single prayer of thine will appease him. In fine, if thou protectest me, I hope all; for thou art all-powerful. O Mother of mercy, I know that thou takest pleasure and dost glory in helping the most miserable, and, provided they are not obstinate, that thou canst help them. I am a sinner, but am not obstinate; I desire to change my life. Thou canst, then, help me; O help me and save me. I now place myself entirely in thy hands. Tell me what I must do in order to please God, and I am ready for all, and hope to do all with thy help, O Mary—Mary my Mother, my light, my consolation, my refuge, my hope. Amen, amen, amen.

CHAPTER VI.

Eia ergo, Advocata nostra!

O GRACIOUS ADVOCATE.

MARY, OUR ADVOCATE.

I.

Mary is an Advocate who is able to save all.

So great is the authority that mothers possess over their sons, that even if they are monarchs, and have absolute dominion over every person in their kingdom, yet never can mothers become the subjects of their sons. It is true that Jesus now in heaven sits at the right hand of the Father, that is, as St. Thomas explains it, even as man, on account of the hypostatical union with the Person of the divine Word. He has supreme dominion over all, and also over Mary; it will nevertheless be always true that for a time when he was living in this world he was pleased to humble himself and to be subject to Mary, as we are told by St. Luke: *And he was subject to them.* (Luke ii. 51.)

And still more, says St. Ambrose, Jesus Christ having deigned to make Mary his Mother, inas-

much as he was her Son, he was truly obliged to obey her. And for this reason, says Richard of St. Laurence, "of other saints we say that they are with God; but of Mary alone can it be said that she was so far favored as to be not only herself submissive to the will of God, but even that God was subject to her will." And whereas of all other virgins, remarks the same author, we must say that *they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth* (Apoc. xiv. 4), of the Blessed Virgin Mary we can say that the Lamb followed her, having become subject to her.

And here we say, that although Mary, now in heaven, can no longer command her Son, nevertheless her prayers are always the prayers of a Mother, and consequently most powerful to obtain whatever she asks. "Mary," says St. Bonaventure, "has this great privilege, that with her Son she above all the saints is most powerful to obtain whatever she wills." And why? Precisely for the reason on which we have already touched, and which we shall later on again examine at greater length, because they are the prayers of a mother.

Therefore, says St. Peter Damian, the Blessed Virgin can do whatever she pleases both in heaven and on earth. She is able to raise even those who are in despair to confidence; and he addresses her in these words: "All power is given to thee in

heaven and on earth, and nothing is impossible to thee who canst raise those who are in despair to the hope of salvation." And then he adds that "when the Mother goes to seek a favor for us from Jesus Christ, her Son esteems her prayers so greatly, and is so desirous to satisfy her, that when she prays it seems as if she rather commanded than prayed, and was rather a queen than a handmaid." Jesus is pleased thus to honor his beloved Mother who honored him so much during her life by immediately granting all that she asks or desires. This is beautifully confirmed by St. Germanus, who addressing our blessed Lady says: "Thou art the Mother of God, and all-powerful to save sinners, and with God thou needest no other recommendation; for thou art the Mother of true life."

"At the command of Mary, all obey, even God." St. Bernardine fears not to utter this sentence; meaning, indeed, to say that God grants the prayers of Mary as if they were commands. And hence St. Anselm addressing Mary says: "Our Lord, O most holy Virgin, has exalted thee to such a degree that by his favor all things that are possible to him should be possible to thee." "For thy protection is omnipotent, O Mary," says Cosmas of Jerusalem. "Yes, Mary is omnipotent," repeats Richard of St. Laurence; "for the queen by every law enjoys the same privileges as the king.

And as," he adds, "the power of the son and that of the mother is the same, a mother is made omnipotent by an omnipotent son." "And thus," says St. Antoninus, "God has placed the whole Church, not only under the patronage, but even under the dominion of Mary."

Since the Mother, then, should have the same power as the Son, rightly has Jesus, who is omnipotent, made Mary also omnipotent; though, of course, it is always true that where the Son is omnipotent by nature, the Mother is only so by grace. But that she is so is evident from the fact that whatever the Mother asks for, the Son never denies her. Mary, then, is called omnipotent in the sense in which it can be understood of a creature who is incapable of a divine attribute. She is omnipotent, because by her prayers she obtains whatever she wills.

With good reason, then, O great advocate, does St. Bernard say, "Thou willest, and all things are done." And St. Anselm: "Whatever thou, O Virgin, willest can never be otherwise than accomplished." Thou willest, and all is done. If thou art pleased to raise a sinner from the lowest abyss of misery to the highest degree of sanctity, thou canst do it.

Thus St. Peter Damian, reflecting on the great power of Mary, and begging her to take compas-

sion on us, addresses her, saying: "O let thy nature move thee, let thy power move thee; for the more thou art powerful, the greater should thy mercy be." O Mary, our own beloved advocate, since thou hast so compassionate a heart that thou canst not even see the wretched without being moved to pity, and since, at the same time, thou hast so great power with God that thou canst save all whom thou dost protect, disdain not to undertake the cause of us poor miserable creatures who place all our hope in thee. If our prayers cannot move thee, at least let thine own benign heart do so; or at least let thy power do so, since God has enriched thee with so great power, in order that the richer thou art in power to help us, the more merciful thou mayest be in the will to assist us. But St. Bernard reassures us on this point: for he says that Mary is as immensely rich in mercy as she is in power; and that, as her charity is most powerful, so also it is most clement and compassionate, and its effects continually prove it to be so. He thus expresses himself: "The most powerful and merciful charity of the Mother of God abounds in tender compassion and in effectual succor: it is equally rich in both."

From the time that Mary came into the world, her only thought, after seeking the glory of God,

was to succor the miserable. And even then she enjoyed the privilege of obtaining whatever she asked. This we know from what occurred at the marriage feast of Cana in Galilee. When the wine failed, the most blessed Virgin, being moved to compassion at the sight of the affliction and shame of the bride and bridegroom, asked her Son to relieve them by a miracle, telling him that *they had no wine.* Jesus answered: *Woman, what is that to thee and me? My hour is not yet come.* (John ii. 3.) And here remark that although Our Lord seemed to refuse his Mother the favor she asked, and said, What is it to thee, O woman, and to me, if the wine has failed? This is not the time for me to work a miracle; the time will be when I begin to preach, and when miracles will be required to confirm my doctrines—yet Mary, as if the favor had already been granted, desired those in attendance to fill the jars with water, for they would be immediately satisfied. And so it was; for Jesus, to content his Mother, changed the water into the best wine. For though, generally speaking, the time for miracles was not come, yet from all eternity God had determined by another decree that nothing that she asked should ever be refused to the divine Mother. And therefore Mary, who well knew her privilege, although her Son seemed

to have refused her the favor, yet told them to fill the jars with water, as if her request had already been granted. That is the sense in which St. John Chrysostom understood it; for, explaining these words of Our Lord, *Woman, what is it to thee and me?* he says that "though Jesus answered thus, yet in honor of his Mother he obeyed her wish." This is confirmed by St. Thomas, who says that by the words, *My hour is not yet come*, Jesus Christ intended to show that had the request come from any other he would not then have complied with it; but because it was addressed to him by his Mother he could not refuse it. St. Cyril and St. Jerome, quoted by Barrada, say the same thing. Also Gandavensis, on the foregoing passage of St. John, says that "to honor his Mother, Our Lord anticipated the time for working miracles."

In fine, it is certain that no creature can obtain so many mercies for us as this tender advocate, who is thus honored by God, not only as his beloved handmaid, but also as his true Mother. Valerius Maximus relates that when Coriolanus was besieging Rome, the prayers of his friends and all the citizens were insufficient to make him desist; but as soon as he beheld his mother Veturia imploring him, he could no longer refuse, and immediately raised the siege. But the prayers of Mary with Jesus are as much more powerful

than those of Veturia as the love and gratitude of this Son for his most dear Mother are greater.

St. Antoninus says that "the prayers of the Blessed Virgin, being the prayers of a mother, have in them something of a command; so that it is impossible that she should not obtain what she asks." "And perchance," says St. Augustine, "it is unworthy of the benignity of that Lord to be thus jealous of the honor of his Mother, who declares that he came into the world, not to break but to observe the law; but this law commands us to honor our parents." St. George, Archbishop of Nicomedia, says that Jesus Christ, even as it were to satisfy an obligation under which he placed himself towards his Mother, when she consented to give him his human nature, grants all she asks: "the Son, as if paying a debt, grants all thy petitions."

Therefore St. Augustine says "that Mary, having merited to give flesh to the divine Word, and thus supply the price of our redemption that we might be delivered from eternal death; therefore is she more powerful than all others to help us to gain eternal life." St. Theophilus, Bishop of Alexandria in the time of St. Jerome, left in writing the following words: "The prayers of his Mother are a pleasure to the Son, because he desires to grant all that is granted on her account,

and thus recompense her for the favor she did him in giving him his body." St. John Damascene, addressing the Blessed Virgin, says, "Thou, O Mary, being Mother of the most high God, canst save all by thy prayers, which are increased in value by the maternal authority."

Let us conclude with St. Bonaventure, who, considering the great benefit conferred on us by Our Lord in giving us Mary for our advocate, thus addresses her: "O truly immense and admirable goodness of our God, which has been pleased to grant thee, O sovereign Mother, to us miserable sinners for our advocate, in order that thou, by thy powerful intercession, mayest obtain all that thou pleasest for us." "O wonderful mercy of our God," continues the same saint, "who in order that we might not fly on account of the sentence that might be pronounced against us, has given us his own Mother and the patroness of graces to be our advocate."

Example.

In the year 1683 the Turkish hosts forced their way through Hungary to Vienna, and were besieging that city with an army of two hundred thousand men. When Pope Innocent XI. heard of this terrible danger to all Christendom, he proclaimed a general jubilee, and granted a plenary indulgence to all who would come to the relief of Emperor Leopold I., by prayers, money, arms, or service. He

entreated the faithful to do penance and reform, and exhorted them particularly to have recourse to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, whose prayers are all-powerful with her Son.

The siege lasted for sixty days, and it seemed impossible to hold the city any longer. But when the need is greatest, the help of God is nearest. John Sobieski, the king of Poland, was hurrying in forced marches to join Duke Charles of Lorraine, who was the commander-in-chief of the allied armies. Although the Turks exceeded in numbers the Christian forces, yet the Christian leaders depended upon the prayers of the Blessed Virgin. The Polish king called upon the soldiers to have faith in Mary, and with the cry, "Jesus and Mary," the Christians fell upon the enemy. Confusion came over the Turks and they took to flight in wild disorder. The camp equipment, artillery, and munition of the enemy, to say nothing of provisions and treasures, were all taken by the Christians. This grand victory was unanimously ascribed to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. In memory of the wonderful event Pope Innocent XI. ordered that the feast of the name of Mary should be kept every year by all Christendom on the Sunday after the Feast of her Nativity.

Prayer of St. Ephrem.

O immaculate and wholly pure Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Queen of the world, hope of those who are in despair; thou art the joy of the saints; thou art the peacemaker between sinners and God; thou art the advocate of the abandoned, the secure haven of those who are on the sea of the world; thou art the consolation of the world, the ransom of slaves, the comfortress of the afflicted, the salvation of the universe. O great Queen, we take refuge in

thy protection. "We have no confidence but in thee, O most faithful Virgin." After God, thou art all my hope. We bear the name of thy servants; allow not the enemy to drag us to hell. I salute thee, O great mediatress of peace between men and God, Mother of Jesus our Lord, who is the love of all men and of God, to whom be honor and benediction with the Father and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

II.

Mary is so tender an Advocate that she does not refuse to defend the Cause even of the most miserable.

So many are the reasons that we have for loving this our most loving Queen, that if Mary was praised throughout the world; if in every sermon Mary alone was spoken of; if all men gave their lives for Mary; still all would be little in comparison with the homage and gratitude that we owe her in return for the tender love she bears to men, and even to the most miserable sinners who preserve the slightest spark of devotion for her. Blessed Raymond Jordano says: "Mary, as our most loving advocate, herself offers the prayers of her servants to God, and especially those who are placed in her hands; for as the Son intercedes for us with the Father, so does she intercede with the Son, and does not cease to make interest with both for the great affair of our salvation, and to

obtain for us the graces we ask." He adds "that her benignity and mercy are so great that no one, however enormous his sins may be, should fear to cast himself at her feet, for she never can reject any one who has recourse to her."

But should there by chance be a sinner who, though not doubting her power, might doubt the compassion of Mary, fearing perhaps that she might be unwilling to help him on account of the greatness of his sins, let him take courage from the words of St. Bonaventure: "The great, the special privilege of Mary is, that she is all-powerful with her Son." "But," adds the saint, "to what purpose would Mary have so great power if she cared not for us?" "No," he concludes, "let us not doubt, but be certain, and let us always thank Our Lord and his divine Mother for it, that in proportion as her power with God exceeds that of all the saints, so is she in the same proportion our most loving advocate, and the one who is the most solicitous for our welfare."

Mary takes care of all, even of sinners; indeed she glories in being called in a special manner their advocate. "Oh, with what efficacy and love," says St. Bernard, "does this good advocate interest herself in the affair of our salvation!" St. Bonaventure, considering the affection and zeal with which Mary intercedes for us with the divine

Majesty, in order that Our Lord may pardon us our sins, help us with his grace, free us from dangers, and relieve us in our wants, says, addressing the Blessed Virgin, in the words of an ancient writer: "We know that we have as it were but one solicitous in heaven for us, and thou art this one, so greatly does thy solicitude for us exceed that of all the saints." That is, "O Lady, it is true that all the saints desire our salvation, and pray for us; but the love, the tenderness that thou showest us in heaven, in obtaining for us by thy prayers so many mercies from God, obliges us to acknowledge that in heaven we have but one advocate, and that is thyself; and that thou alone art truly loving and solicitous for our welfare."

For this reason is Mary called by St. Bonaventure "the wise Abigail." This is the woman we read of in the first Book of Kings, who by her beautiful supplications knew so well how to appease King David when he was indignant against Nabal; and indeed so far as to induce him to bless her, in gratitude for having prevented him, by her sweet manners, from avenging himself on Nabal with his own hands. This is exactly what Mary constantly does in heaven, in favor of innumerable sinners: by her tender and unctuous prayers she knows so well how to appease the divine justice that God himself blesses her for it, and, as it were,

thanks her for having withheld him from abandoning and chastising them as they deserved.

"There is no doubt," says St. Bernard, "that Jesus Christ is the only mediator of justice between men and God; that, by virtue of his own merits and promises, he will and can obtain us pardon and the divine favors; but because men acknowledge and fear the divine Majesty, which is in him as God, for this reason it was necessary to assign us another advocate, to whom we might have recourse with less fear and more confidence, and this advocate is Mary, than whom we cannot find one more powerful with his divine majesty, or one more merciful towards ourselves." The saint says, "Christ is a faithful and powerful Mediator between God and men, but in him men fear the majesty of God. A mediator, then, was needed with the mediator himself; nor could a more fitting one be found than Mary."

"But," continues the same saint, "should any one fear to go to the feet of this most sweet advocate, who has nothing in her of severity, nothing terrible, but who is all courteous, amiable, and benign, he would indeed be offering an insult to the tender compassion of Mary." And he adds, "Read, and read again, as often as you please, all that is said of her in the Gospels, and if you can find the least trait of severity recorded of her,

then fear to approach her. But no, this you can never find; and therefore go to her with a joyful heart and she will save you by her intercession."

"Be comforted then, O you who fear," will I say with St. Thomas of Villanova: "breathe freely and take courage, O wretched sinners; this great Virgin, who is the Mother of your God and Judge, is also the advocate of the whole human race; fit for this office, for she can do what she wills with God; most wise, for she knows all the means of appeasing him; universal, for she welcomes all, and refuses to defend no one."

Example.

In the month of May, 1867, the Redemptorists at Huete in Spain made a novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, whose image is venerated in their church. The whole city took part in this beautiful devotion. One woman brought her seven-year-old boy, who had been blind for three months as a result of the small-pox. With tears in her eyes she knelt down before the picture and said to the boy: "Dear child, pray to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, that she may restore your eyesight." Then the child raised his hands and said: "O Lady of Perpetual Help, I have lost my eyes, give me my eyes again." He had hardly uttered these words when he called out in a loud voice: "Mother, mother, I see the Blessed Virgin! Oh, how beautiful she is. I can see you too. I can see my hands." The happy mother pressed her child to her heart, and the whole city took a pious interest and delight in him. (Manual of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.)

Prayer of William, Bishop of Paris.

O Mother of God, I have recourse to thee, and I call upon thee not to reject me; for the whole congregation of the faithful calls and proclaims thee the Mother of mercy. Thou art that one who, from being so dear to God, art always graciously heard; thy clemency was never wanting to any one; thy most benign affability never despised any sinner who had recourse to thee, however enormous his crimes. Can it be falsely or in vain that the Church calls thee her advocate and the refuge of sinners? Never let it be said that my sins could prevent thee from fulfilling the great office of mercy, which is peculiarly thine own, by which thou art the advocate and mediatress of peace, the only hope and most secure refuge of the miserable. Never shall it be said that the Mother of God, who for the benefit of the world brought forth him who is the fountain of mercy, denied her mercy to any sinner who had recourse to her. Thine office is that of peacemaker between God and men; let, then, the greatness of thy compassion, and which far exceeds my sins, move thee to help me.

III.

Mary is the Peacemaker between Sinners and God.

Mary was prefigured by the dove which returned to Noe in the Ark with an olive branch in its beak (Gen. viii. 2) as a pledge of the peace which God granted to men. And on this idea St. Bonaventure thus addresses our blessed Lady: "Thou art that most faithful dove; thou wast a

sure mediatress between God and the world, lost in a spiritual deluge; thou, by presenting thyself before God, hast obtained for a lost world peace and salvation." Mary, then, was the heavenly dove which brought to a lost world the olive-branch, the sign of mercy, since she in the first place gave us Jesus Christ, who is the source of mercy; and then, by his merits, obtained all graces for us.

The chief office given to Mary, on being placed in this world, was to raise up souls that had fallen from divine grace, and to reconcile them with God. *Feed thy goats* (Cant. i. 7) was Our Lord's command to her in creating her. It is well known that sinners are understood by goats, and that as at the last judgment, the just, under the figure of sheep, will be on the right hand, so will the goats be on the left. "These goats," says the Abbot William, "are intrusted to thee, O great Mother, that thou mayest change them into sheep; and those who by their sins deserve to be driven to the left will by thy intercession be placed on the right." And therefore Our Lord revealed to St. Catharine of Sienna "that he had created this his beloved daughter to be as a most sweet bait by which to catch men, and especially sinners, and draw them to God." O, how many obstinate sinners does not this lodestone

of hearts draw each day to God! For thus did she call herself one day, saying to St. Bridget, "As the lodestone attracts iron, so do I attract hearts." Yea, even the most hardened hearts, to reconcile them with God. We must not suppose that such prodigies are extraordinary events; they are every-day occurrences.

St. John Chrysostom says "that another purpose for which the Blessed Virgin Mary was made the Mother of God was, that she might obtain salvation for many who, on account of their wicked lives, could not be saved according to the rigor of divine justice, but might be so with the help of her sweet mercy and powerful intercession." This is confirmed by St. Anselm, who says "that Mary was raised to the dignity of Mother of God rather for sinners than for the just, since Jesus Christ declares that he came to call not the just, but sinners."

The holy Church tells us, in the prayer said in the Mass of the vigil of the Assumption, "that the divine Mother was taken from this world that she might interpose for us with God, with certain confidence of obtaining all."

"Then, O sinner," says St. Bernard, "whoever thou mayest be, imbedded in crime, grown old in sin, despair not; thank thy Lord, who, that he might show thee mercy, has not only given his

Son for thy advocate, but, to encourage thee to greater confidence, has provided thee with a mediatress who by her prayers obtains whatever she wills. Go then, have recourse to Mary, and thou wilt be saved."

Example.

St. Bernardine of Sienna was born at Massacarrara in Italy in the year 1383. He was destined by God for great things. His great humility, his self-sacrifice during the plague, the eloquence of his sermons, won thousands of people to penance. It was even given to him to modify the Order of St. Francis. He was filled with a singular love and reverence for the Blessed Virgin and looked upon her veneration as one of the best means of becoming perfect. Even in his earliest youth he formed the habit of fasting on Saturdays and followed this rule, which has been recommended by so many saints and holy people, all his life. Under the protection of Mary he distinguished himself by the extraordinary purity of his life. His face became scarlet with shame if any one told a story of impure import in his hearing, so that his mere presence was enough to restrain his most impertinent companions. When he was seventeen years old he joined a brotherhood at Sienna, and entered the hospital to devote himself to the care of the sick. Soon after he entered the hospital the plague, which was raging in other parts of Italy, reached Sienna. Bernardine induced twelve other men to help him, and undaunted by the terrible ravages of the pest, they nursed the sick until the epidemic was over. The Lord, to whom all things are known, rewarded the devotion of the youth by calling him to the religious life under the

rule of St. Francis. He took his vows on the 8th of September, the Feast of the Nativity. All his work and his undertakings he placed under the protection of Our Lady, and his apostolic labors were crowned with wonderful success. He founded nearly three hundred religious houses and died a holy death on the 10th of May, 1444. His saintliness was so well known and was attested by so many miracles that Pope Nicholas V. canonized him in the sixth year after his death.

Prayer.

O greatest and most sublime of all creatures, most sacred Virgin, I salute thee from this earth—I, a miserable and unfortunate rebel against my God, who deserve chastisements, not favors, justice, and not mercy. O my Mother, it was thou who didst one day weep over thy Son who died for me. Offer, I beseech thee, thy tears to God, and by these obtain for me true sorrow for my sins. Sinners then afflicted thee so much, and I, by my crimes, have done the same. Obtain for me, O Mary, that at least from this day forward I may not continue to afflict thee and thy Son by my ingratitude. What would thy sorrow avail me if I continued to be ungrateful to thee? To what purpose would thy mercy have been shown me if again I was unfaithful and lost? No, my Queen, permit it not; thou hast supplied for all my shortcomings. Thou obtainest from God what thou wilt. Thou grantest the prayers of all. I ask of thee two graces; I expect them from thee, and will not be satisfied with less. Obtain for me that I may be faithful to God, and no more offend him, and love him during the remainder of my life as much as I have offended him.

CHAPTER VII.

Illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.

TURN, THEN, THINE EYES OF MERCY TOWARDS US.

MARY, OUR GUARDIAN.

Mary is All Eyes to Pity and Succor Us in our Necessities.

"EVEN whilst living in this world," says St. Jerome, "the heart of Mary was so filled with tenderness and compassion for men that no one ever suffered so much for his own pains as Mary suffered for the pains of others." The compassion for others in affliction she well showed at the marriage-feast of Cana, spoken of in the preceding chapters, when the wine failing, without being asked, remarks St. Bernardine of Sienna, she charged herself with the office of a tender comfortress, and moved to compassion at the sight of the embarrassment of the bride and bridegroom, she interposed with her Son and obtained the miraculous change of water into wine.

"But perhaps," says St. Peter Damian, addressing Mary, "now that thou art raised to the high dignity of Queen of heaven, thou forgettest us poor creatures?" "Ah, far be such a thought from our minds," he adds; "for it would little become the great compassion that reigns in the heart of Mary ever to forget such misery as ours." The proverb, that "honors change our manners," does not apply to Mary. With worldlings it is otherwise; for they, when once raised to a high dignity, become proud, and forget their former poor friends, but it is not so with Mary, who rejoices in her own exaltation, because she is thus better able to help the miserable.

On this subject St. Bonaventure applies to the Blessed Virgin the words addressed to Ruth: *Blessed art thou of the Lord, my daughter, and thy latter kindness has surpassed the former* (Ruth iii. 10); meaning to say "that if the compassion of Mary was great towards the miserable when living in this world, it is much greater now that she reigns in heaven." He then gives the reason for this, saying "that the divine Mother shows, by the innumerable graces that she obtains for us, her greater mercy; for now she is better acquainted with our miseries." Thence he adds "that as the splendor of the sun surpasses that of the moon, so does the compassion of Mary, now that

she is in heaven, surpass the compassion she had for us when in the world." In conclusion, he asks, "Who is there living in this world who does not enjoy the light of the sun? and on whom does not the mercy of Mary shine?"

St. Bernard says "that Mary has made herself all to all, and opens her merciful heart to all, that all may receive of her fulness: the slave redemption, the sick health, those in affliction comfort, the sinner pardon, and God glory; that thus there may be no one who can hide himself from her warmth." "And therefore," says St. Bonaventure, "this loving Mother has so earnest a desire to do good to all, that not only is she offended by those who positively outrage her, as some are wicked enough to do, but she is offended at those who do not ask her for favors or graces."

The prophet Isaias foretold that, together with the great work of the redemption of the human race, a throne of divine mercy was to be prepared for us poor creatures: *And a throne shall be prepared in mercy.* (Is. xvi. 5.) What is this throne? St. Bonaventure answers, "Mary is this throne, at which all—just and sinners—find the consolation of mercy." He then adds: "For as we have a most merciful Lord, so also we have a most merciful Lady. Our Lord is plenteous in mercy to all who call upon him, and Our Lady is

plenteous in mercy to all who call upon her." As Our Lord is full of mercy, so also is Our Lady; and as the Son knows not how to refuse mercy to those who call upon him, neither does the Mother.

Should the sight of our sins ever discourage us, let us address the Mother of mercy in the words of William of Paris: "O Lady, do not set up my sins against me, for I oppose thy compassion to them. Let it never be said that my sins could contend in judgment against thy mercy, which is far more powerful to obtain me pardon than my sins are to obtain my condemnation."

Example.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century there were seven men living in Florence, who, though noted for their wealth and position, were even more noted for their piety. Moved by this piety they determined to leave the world and band themselves together under the protection of Mary to live a life of seclusion and penance. This was the beginning of the famous Order of the Servants of Mary or the Servites. This order, so venerable because of its name and the services it has rendered the Church, owed its growth to St. Philip Beniti. Philip was barely five months old when he saw several religious of the Servite order gathering alms, when speech was given him and he said to his mother: "See, the Servants of Mary." When he was in his fifteenth year and was considering his vocation. he attended

Mass on Holy Thursday in the Servite Chapel of the Annunciation, and there felt an interior call to enter the order. The following night a mysterious dream showed him the dangers of the world and a vision of the Blessed Virgin decided him altogether. After this his devotion to Mary was more ardent than ever. He prayed for hours before her image and tried to imitate her virtues in his daily life. He journeyed to France, to the Netherlands. Everywhere he preached the glories of Mary, until he was called the apostle of Mary. In 1285 he spent the night before the feast of the Assumption in prayer and preached a sermon on Mary in the morning. After this he fell into a light fever, which nevertheless brought him to his death in a few days. In his last hours he assured his brethren in religion that he owed all graces and all success in his labors to the Blessed Virgin next to Christ. He encouraged them to be faithful in their devotion to her, as he who perseveres in venerating her must surely achieve his salvation.

Prayer of St. Anselm.

We beseech thee, O most holy Lady, by the favor that God did thee, in raising thee so high as to make all things possible to thee with him, so to act that the plenitude of grace, which thou didst merit, may render us partakers of thy glory. Strive, O most merciful Lady, to obtain for us that for which God was pleased to become man in thy chaste womb. O, lend us a willing ear. If thou deignest to pray to thy Son for this, he will immediately grant it. It suffices that thou willest our salvation, and then we are sure to obtain it. But who can restrain thy great mercy? If thou, who art our Mother, and the

Mother of mercy, dost not pity us, what will become of us when thy Son comes to judge us? Help us, then, O most compassionate Lady, and consider not the multitude of our sins. We recommend ourselves to thee; O, let us not lose our souls, but make us eternally serve and love thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

Et Jesum, benedictum Fructum ventris tui nobis post hoc exilium ostende.

AND AFTER THIS OUR EXILE SHOW UNTO US THE BLESSED FRUIT OF THY WOMB, JESUS.

MARY, OUR SALVATION.

I.

Mary delivers her Clients from Hell.

IT is impossible for a client of Mary who is faithful in honoring and recommending himself to her to be lost. To some this proposition may appear, at first sight, exaggerated; but any one to whom this might seem to be the case I would beg to suspend his judgment, and, first of all, read what I have to say on this subject.

When we say that it is impossible for a client of Mary to be lost, we must not be understood as speaking of those clients who take advantage of this devotion that they may sin more freely. And therefore those who disapprove of the great praises bestowed on the clemency of this most blessed

Virgin, because it causes the wicked to take advantage of it to sin with greater freedom, do so without foundation, for such presumptive people deserve chastisement, and not mercy, for their rash confidence. It is therefore to be understood of those clients who, with a sincere desire to amend, are faithful in honoring and recommending themselves to the Mother of God.

St. Anselm says "that as it is impossible for one who is not devout to Mary, and consequently not protected by her, to be saved, so is it impossible for one who recommends himself to her, and consequently is beloved by her, to be lost." St. Antoninus repeats the same thing and almost in the same words: "As it is impossible for those from whom Mary turns her eyes of mercy to be saved, so also are those towards whom she turns these eyes, and for whom she prays, necessarily saved and glorified."

Let us pay particular attention to the first part of the opinions of these saints, and let those tremble who make but little account of their devotion to this divine Mother, or from carelessness give it up. They say that the salvation of those who are not protected by Mary is impossible. And St. Bonaventure says: "He who neglects the service of the Blessed Virgin will die in his sins." And, on the 99th Psalm the saint even says "that

not only those from whom Mary turns her face will not be saved, but that there will be no hope of their salvation." Before him St. Ignatius the Martyr said "that it was impossible for any sinner to be saved without the help and favor of the most blessed Virgin; because those who are not saved by the justice of God are with infinite mercy saved by the intercession of Mary."

For this reason the devil does his utmost with sinners in order that, after they have lost the grace of God, they may also lose devotion to Mary. When Sarah saw Isaac in company with Ismael, who was teaching him evil habits, she desired that Abraham would drive away both Ismael and his mother Agar: *Cast out this bond-woman and her son.* (Gen. xxi. 10.) She was not satisfied with the son being turned out of the house, but insisted on the mother going also, thinking that otherwise the son, coming to see his mother, would continue to frequent the house. The devil, also, is not satisfied with a soul turning out Jesus Christ, unless it also turns out his Mother: *Cast out this bond-woman and her son.* Otherwise he fears that the Mother will again, by her intercession, bring back her Son. The will to save us cannot be wanting, for Mary is our Mother, and desires our salvation more than we can desire it ourselves. Since, then, this is the case, how can it be possible for a

client of Mary to be lost? He may be a sinner, but if he recommends himself to this good Mother with perseverance and purpose of amendment, she will undertake to obtain him light to abandon his wicked state, sorrow for his sins, perseverance in virtue, and, finally, a good death. And what mother would not deliver her son from death if it only depended on her asking the favor to obtain it from the judge? And can we think that Mary, who loves her clients with a mother's most tender love, will not deliver her child from eternal death when she can do it so easily?

Ah! devout reader, let us thank Our Lord if we see that he has given us affection for the Queen of heaven and confidence in her; "for," says St. John Damascene, "God only grants this favor to those whom he is determined to save." The following are the beautiful words of the saint, with which he rekindles his own and our hope: "O Mother of God, if I place my confidence in thee, I shall be saved. If I am under thy protection, I have nothing to fear, for the fact of being thy client is the possession of a certainty of salvation, and which God only grants to those whom he intends to save." Therefore Erasmus salutes the Blessed Virgin in these words: "Hail! O terror of hell; O hope of Christians; confidence in thee is a pledge of salvation."

"O, how many would have remained obstinate in sin, and have been eternally lost," says Thomas à Kempis, "if Mary had not interposed with her Son, that he might show them mercy!"

Blessed Henry Suso used to say "that he had placed his soul in the hands of Mary, and that if he was condemned, the sentence must pass through her hands;" being confident that if it was in such hands, this tender Virgin would certainly prevent its execution. The same do I hope for myself, O my own most holy Queen; and therefore I will always repeat the words of St. Bonaventure: "In thee, O Lady, have I placed all my hopes; and thus I confidently trust that I shall never be lost, but praise and love thee forever in heaven."

Example.

A young man who had sinned often and grievously against holy chastity, once went to confession at Rome and told his father confessor that in spite of all his resolutions he fell into sin again and again. The priest advised him to say a Hail Mary every morning and evening and to put himself under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. A short time afterwards the young man left Rome and was gone for several years. Upon his return he visited his father confessor, who was happy to see that the young man had overcome his sinful habit. And being asked how he did it, he answered that it was by following the priest's advice and faithfully saying the Hail Mary every morning and evening.

Prayer of St. Bernard.

We raise our eyes to thee, O Queen of the world. We must appear before our Judge after so many sins: who will appease him? No one can do it better than thou canst, O holy Lady, who hast loved him so much, and by whom thou art so tenderly beloved. Open, then, O Mother of mercy, thy heart to our sighs and prayers. We fly to thy protection; appease the wrath of thy Son, and restore us to his grace. Thou dost not abhor a sinner, however loathsome he may be. Thou dost not despise him if he sends up his sighs to thee, and, repentant, asks thy intercession. Thou, with thy compassionate hand, deliverest him from despair. Thou animatest him to hope, and dost not leave him until thou hast reconciled him with his Judge. O sweet, O great, O all-amiable Mary, no heart can pronounce thy name but thou inflamest it with thy love; nor can they who love thee think of thee without feeling themselves strengthened to love thee more.

O holy Lady, help our weakness. And who is more fit to address Our Lord Jesus Christ than thou who enjoyest in such close vicinity his most sweet converse? Speak, then, speak, O Lady; for thy Son listens to thee, and thou wilt obtain all that thou askest of him.

II.

Mary leads her Servants to Heaven.

Oh, what an evident mark of predestination have the servants of Mary! St. Antoninus tells us "that this divine Mother has already, by her assistance and prayers, obtained heaven for us,

provided we put no obstacle in the way." St. Bonaventure says "that the gates of heaven will open to all who confide in the protection of Mary." Hence, St. Ephrem calls devotion to the divine Mother "the unlocking of the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem." For the same reason is this great Mother called by the Church the Star of the Sea, "Hail, Star of the Sea!" "For," says the angelical St. Thomas, "as sailors are guided by a star to the port, so are Christians guided to heaven by Mary."

For the same reason again is she called by St. Fulgentius "the heavenly ladder." "For," says the saint, "by Mary God descended from heaven into the world, that by her men might ascend from earth to heaven." "And thou, O Lady," says St. Athanasius, "wast filled with grace that thou mightest be the way of our salvation and the means of ascent to the heavenly kingdom."

St. Bernard calls our blessed Lady "the heavenly chariot." "Blessed are they who know thee, O Mother of God," says St. Bonaventure; "for the knowledge of thee is the highroad to everlasting life, and the publication of thy virtues is the way of eternal salvation." St. John Damascene also says "that to serve Mary and be her courtier is the greatest honor we can possibly possess; for to serve the Queen of heaven is

already to reign there, and to live under her commands is more than to govern." On the other hand, he adds "that those who do not serve Mary will not be saved; for those who are deprived of the help of this great Mother are also deprived of that of her Son and of the whole court of heaven."

"May the infinite goodness of Our Lord be ever praised," says St. Bernard, "for having been pleased to give us Mary as our advocate in heaven, that she, being at the same time the Mother of our Judge and a Mother of mercy, may be able, by her intercession, to conduct to a prosperous issue the great affair of our eternal salvation."

Nor should those even who have deserved hell be in the least doubtful as to obtaining heaven, provided they are faithful in serving this Queen. "O, how many sinners," says St. Germanus, "have found God and have been saved by thy means, O Mary!" "And thou, O great Mother," says St. Methodius, "art the beginning, the middle, and the end of our happiness"—the beginning, for Mary obtains us the pardon of our sins; the middle, for she obtains us perseverance in divine grace; and the end, for she finally obtains us heaven. "By thee, O Mary, was heaven opened," says St. Bernard; "by thee was hell

emptied; by thee was paradise restored; and through thee, in fine, is eternal life given to so many miserable creatures who deserved eternal death."

But that which above all should encourage us to hope with confidence for heaven is the beautiful promise made by Mary herself to all who honor her, and especially to those who, by word and example, endeavor to make her known and honored by others: *They that work by me shall not sin; they that explain me shall have life everlasting.* (Ecclus. xxiv. 30.) "O happy they who obtain the favor of Mary!" exclaims St. Bonaventure; "they will be recognized by the blessed as their companions, and whoever bears the stamp of a servant of Mary is already enrolled in the Book of Life."

Why, then, should we trouble ourselves about the opinions of scholastics as to whether predestination to glory precedes or follows the prevision of merits? If we are true servants of Mary, and obtain her protection, we most certainly shall be inscribed in the Book of Life; for, says St. John Damascene, "God only grants devotion towards his most holy Mother to those whom he will save." This is also clearly expressed by Our Lord in St. John: *He that shall overcome . . . I will write upon him the name of my God, and the*

name of the city of my God. (Apoc. iii. 12.) And who but Mary is this city of God? observes St. Gregory on the words of David: *Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God.* (Ps. lxxxvi. 3.)

Correctly, then, can we here say with St. Paul, *Having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are his;* that is to say, whoever carries with him the mark of devotion to Mary is recognized by God as his. Hence St. Bernard writes that devotion to the Mother of God is a most certain mark of eternal salvation.

Father Nieremberg says, in the tenth chapter of his book on *Affection for Mary*, that "the servants of the Mother of God are not only privileged and favored in this world, but even in heaven they are more particularly honored." He then adds "that in heaven they will be recognized as servants of its Queen, and as belonging to her court, by a distinguishing and richer garment;" according to the words of the Proverbs, *All her domestics are clothed with double garments.*

St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi saw a vessel in the midst of the sea: in it were all the clients of Mary, and this Blessed Mother herself steered it safely into the port. By this the saint understood that those who live under the protection of Mary are secure, in the midst of the dangers of this life, from the shipwreck of sin, and from eternal

damnation; for she guides them safely into the haven of salvation. Let us then enter this blessed ship of the mantle of Mary, and there we can be certain of the kingdom of heaven; for the Church says: "O holy Mother of God, all those who will be partakers of eternal happiness dwell in thee, living under thy protection."

Example.

The great aid which Mary renders those who implore her help is shown by the story of St. Justina, which is related by St. Gregory Nazianzen. She was born in Antioch of noble parents and was a young woman of great beauty. But the beauty of her soul was even greater than that of her body. She had united herself to Christ by the vows of virginity and every impulse of her heart was dedicated to her heavenly Bridegroom. Her heart was as a closed garden against everything evil. At this time there was a young man named Cyprian in Antioch, who, filled with a wicked curiosity, took up the study of magic. One day he chanced to see Justina and at once he was filled with an unholy passion for her. Finding that he could not win favor with the maiden by any of his arts, he at last determined to resort to magic. He succeeded in so far that the young woman was assailed by the fiercest temptations against her chastity. In her extremity she took refuge with the Blessed Virgin, and not in vain. The spirit of evil was compelled to leave Justina in peace and the jewel of purity was preserved to her. The Blessed Virgin obtained the grace also of enlightenment for the wicked young man who had tried to destroy Justina. Her stead-

fastness showed him the helplessness of the evil spirits against those fortified by the religion of Jesus, and he himself was baptized and followed St. Justina in giving testimony to the faith by dying a martyr to its truth.

Prayer.

O Queen of heaven, Mother of holy love! since thou art the most amiable of creatures, the most beloved of God, and his greatest lover, be pleased to allow the most miserable sinner living in this world, who having by thy means been delivered from hell, and without any merit on his part been so benefited by thee and who is filled with love for thee, to love thee. I would desire, were it in my power, to let all men who know thee not know how worthy thou art of love, that all might love and honor thee. I would desire to die for love of thee, in defence of thy virginity, of thy dignity of Mother of God, of thy Immaculate Conception, should this be necessary, to uphold these thy great privileges. Ah! my most beloved Mother accept this my ardent desire, and never allow a servant of thine, who loves thee, to become the enemy of thy God, whom thou lovest so much. Ah! Queen most worthy of love, I desire to love thee in heaven. There, at thy feet, I shall better know how worthy thou art of love, how much thou hast done to save me; and thus I shall love thee with greater love, and love thee eternally, without fear of ever ceasing to love thee. O Mary, I hope most certainly to be saved by thy means. Pray to Jesus for me. Nothing else is needed; thou hast to save me; thou art my hope. I will therefore always sing, O Mary, my hope, thou hast to save me.

CHAPTER IX.

O clemens, O pia!

O MERCIFUL, O PIOUS.

CLEMENCY AND COMPASSION OF MARY.

How great are the Clemency and Compassion of Mary.

ST. BONAVENTURE also, considering that Mary was made Mother of God on account of the miserable, and that to her is committed the charge of dispensing mercy; considering, moreover, the tender care she takes of all, and that her compassion is so great that she seems to have no other desire than that of relieving the needy; says that when he looks at her, he seems no longer to see the justice of God, but only the divine mercy, of which Mary is full. "O Lady, when I behold thee, I can only discern mercy, for thou wast made Mother of God for the wretched, and then thou wast intrusted with their charge; thou art all solicitude for them; thou art walled in with mercy; thy only wish is to show it."

Rebecca was a figure of Mary; and she, when asked by Abraham's servant for a little water to

drink, replied that not only would she give him plenty for himself, but also for his camels, saying, *I will draw water for thy camels also till they all drink.* (Gen. xxiv. 19.) On these words St. Bernard addresses our blessed Lady, saying: "O Mary, thou art far more liberal and compassionate than Rebecca; and therefore thou art not satisfied with distributing the treasures of thy immense mercy only to the just, of whom Abraham's servants were types, but also thou bestowest them on sinners who are signified by the camels." "The liberality of Mary," says Richard of St. Laurence, "is like that of her Son, who always gives more than he is asked for." *He is,* says St. Paul, *rich unto all that call upon him.* (Rom. x. 12.) "And the liberality of Mary is like his: she bestows more than is sought." Hear how a devout writer thus addresses the Blessed Virgin: "O Lady, do thou pray for me, for thou wilt ask for the graces I require with greater devotion than I can dare to ask for them; and thou wilt obtain far greater graces from God for me than I can presume to seek."

When the Samaritans refused to receive Jesus Christ and his doctrines, St. James and St. John asked him whether they should command fire to fall from heaven and devour them; Our Lord

replied, *You know not of what spirit you are.* (Luke ix. 55.) As if he had said, "I am of so tender and compassionate a spirit that I came from heaven to save and not to chastise sinners, and you wish to see them lost. Fire, indeed! and punishment!—speak no more of chastisements, for such a spirit is not mine." But of Mary, whose spirit is the same as that of her Son, we can never doubt that she is all-inclined to mercy. For this reason Mary was seen by St. John clothed with the sun: *And a great sign appeared in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun.* (Apoc. xii. 1.) On which words St. Bernard, turning towards the Blessed Virgin, says, "Thou, O Lady, hast clothed the sun, that is the Eternal Word, with human flesh; but he has clothed thee with his power and mercy."

"This Queen," continues the same St. Bernard, "is so compassionate and benign, that when a sinner, whoever he may be, recommends himself to her charity, she does not question his merits, or whether he is worthy or unworthy to be attended to, but she hears and succors all." "O, how many," exclaims the Abbot of Celles, "who deserved to be condemned by the justice of the Son, are saved by the mercy of the Mother? for she is God's treasure, and the treasurer of all graces; and thus our salvation is in her hands, and depends on her." Let us,

then, always have recourse to this compassionate Mother, and confidently hope for salvation through her intercession. For as St. Antoninus says, Mary is that throne of grace to which the Apostle St. Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, exhorts us to fly with confidence, that we may obtain the divine mercy, and all the help we need for our salvation." *Let us therefore go with confidence to the throne of grace: that we may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid.* (Heb. iv. 16.)

Let us conclude with the beautiful and tender exclamation of St. Bonaventure on these words, "O merciful, O compassionate, O sweet Virgin Mary!" "O Mary, thou art clement with the miserable, compassionate towards those who pray to thee, sweet towards those who love thee; clement with the penitent, compassionate to those who advance, sweet to the perfect. Thou showest thyself clement in delivering us from chastisement, compassionate in bestowing graces, and sweet in giving thyself to those who seek thee."

Example.

St. Philip Neri, who was born, in the year 1515, at Florence, was one of the greatest ornaments of the Church in the sixteenth century. From his earliest years he had a tender devotion towards our blessed Mother and tried to inspire the same in others. He called her his joy and his consolation. To those whom he was leading towards salvation he recommended

most earnestly the devotion to the Blessed Virgin. He taught them to say often: "Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to thy Jesus for me." Moreover he was earnest in imitating the virtues of the Blessed Virgin. Particularly did he practice obedience. Even as a child he was scrupulously obedient to his parents. Indeed he had such a high opinion of this virtue that he said: "Obedience is the shortest and surest way to perfection." His love of God remained steadfast in many trials and sufferings, which he bore with a complete surrender of the will to God. His motives were misunderstood, he was traduced and calumniated by evil-minded people, and his health was delicate. But all this did not overcome his spirit nor his devotion. In the last years of his life he was suddenly cured of a painful illness by a vision of the Blessed Virgin. "O my most precious Queen," he cried out, "I do not deserve that thou shouldst come to me." When asked by the physician present what he meant, he answered: "Did you not see the Blessed Virgin, who came to heal me?" And indeed he was cured and rose and went about his labors. He grew to be very old, and died as he had lived, under the protection of Mary, on the twenty-sixth of May, 1595.

Prayer.

O Mother of mercy, since thou art so compassionate, and hast so great a desire to render service to us poor creatures and to grant our requests, behold I, the most miserable of all men, have now recourse to thy compassion, in order that thou mayest grant me that which I ask. Others may ask what they please of thee—bodily health and earthly goods and advantages; but I come, O Lady, to ask thee for that which thou desirest of me, and which is most in

conformity and agreeable to thy most sacred heart. Thou art so humble; obtain for me humility and love of contempt. Thou wast so patient under the sufferings of this life; obtain for me patience in trials. Thou wast all filled with the love of God; obtain for me the gift of his pure and holy love. Thou wast all love towards thy neighbor; obtain for me charity towards all, and particularly towards those who are in any way my enemies. Thou wast entirely united to the divine will; obtain for me entire conformity to the will of God in whatever way he may be pleased to dispose of me. Thou, in fine, art the most holy of all creatures; O Mary, make me a saint. O Mary, my Mother Mary, my hope, my love, my life, my refuge, my help, and my consolation. Amen.

CHAPTER X.

O dulcis Virgo Maria.

O SWEET VIRGIN MARY.

The Sweetness of the Name of Mary during Life and at Death.

THE Abbot Francone, speaking of the name of Mary, says "there is no other name after that of the Son, in heaven or on earth, whence pious minds derive so much grace, hope, and sweetness." After the most sacred name of Jesus, the name of Mary is so rich in every good thing, that on earth and in heaven there is no other from which devout souls receive so much grace, hope, and sweetness. "For," he continues, "there is something so admirable, sweet, and divine in this name of Mary, that when it meets with friendly hearts it breathes into them an odor of delightful sweetness." And he adds, in conclusion, "that the wonder of this great name is, that if heard by the lovers of Mary a thousand times, it is always heard again with renewed pleasure, for they always experience the same sweetness each time it is pronounced."

The Blessed Henry Suso, also speaking of this sweetness, says that when he named Mary, he felt himself so excited to confidence, and inflamed with such love and joy, that between the tears and joy with which he pronounced the beloved name, he desired that his heart might leave his breast; for he declared that this most sweet name was like a honeycomb dissolving in the inmost recess of the soul; and then he would exclaim: "O most sweet name! O Mary, what must thou thyself be, since thy name alone is thus amiable and gracious!"

The enamored St. Bernard, raising his heart to his good Mother, says with tenderness, "O great! O pious! O thou who art worthy of all praise! O most holy Virgin Mary! Thy name is so sweet and amiable that it cannot be pronounced without inflaming those who do so with love towards thee and God. It only need occur to the thought of thy lovers to move them to love thee more and to console them." "Thou canst not be named without inflaming; thou canst not be thought of by those who love thee without filling their minds with joy." "And if riches comfort the poor, because they relieve them in their distress, O how much more does thy name, O Mary," says Richard of St. Laurence, "comfort us than any earthly riches! It comforts us in the

anguishes of this life." "Thy name, O Mary, is far better than riches, because it can better relieve poverty."

In fine, "thy name, O Mother of God, is filled with divine graces and blessings," as St. Methodius says. So much so that St. Bonaventure declares "that thy name, O Mary, cannot be pronounced without bringing some grace to him who does so devoutly." The Blessed Raymond Jordano says "that however hardened and diffident a heart may be, the name of this most blessed Virgin has such efficacy, that if it is only pronounced, that heart will be wonderfully softened." He then tells us that it is she who leads sinners to the hope of pardon and grace: "By thee does the sinner recover the hope of forgiveness and of grace."

Thy most sweet name, O Mary, according to St. Ambrose, "is a precious ointment which breathes forth the odor of divine grace." The saint then prays to the divine Mother, saying: "Let this ointment of salvation enter the inmost recesses of our souls:" that is, grant, O Lady, that we may often remember to name thee with love and confidence; for this practice either shows the possession of divine grace, or else is a pledge that we shall soon recover it. St. Germanus declares "that as breathing is a sign of life, so also is the frequent pronunciation of the name of Mary a

sign either of the life of divine grace, or that it will soon come; for this powerful name has in it the virtue of obtaining help and life for him who invokes it devoutly." In fine, "This admirable name of our sovereign Lady," says Richard of St. Laurence, "is like a fortified tower, in which, if a sinner takes refuge, he will be delivered from death; for it defends and saves even the most abandoned." But it is a tower of strength, which not only delivers sinners from chastisement, but also defends the just from the assaults of hell. Thus the same Richard says "that after the name of Jesus, there is no other in which men find so powerful assistance and salvation as in the great name of Mary."

Moreover, it is well known, and is daily experienced by the clients of Mary, that her powerful name gives the particular strength necessary to overcome temptations against purity. The same author in his commentary on the words of St. Luke, *and the Virgin's name was Mary* (Luke i. 27), remarks that these two words, Mary and Virgin, are joined together by the Evangelist, to denote that the name of this most pure Virgin should always be coupled with the virtue of chastity. Hence St. Peter Chrysologus says "that the name of Mary is an indication of chastity," meaning that when we doubt as to whether we

have consented to thoughts against this virtue, if we remember having invoked the name of Mary, we have a certain proof that we have not sinned.

Let us, therefore, always take advantage of the beautiful advice given us by St. Bernard, in these words: "In dangers, in perplexities, in doubtful cases, think of Mary, call on Mary; let her not leave thy lips; let her not depart from thy heart." In every danger of forfeiting divine grace, we should think of Mary, and invoke her name, together with that of Jesus; for these two names always go together. O, then, never let us permit these two most sweet names to leave our hearts, or be off our lips; for they will give us strength not only not to yield, but to conquer all our temptations.

"If then, O brethren," concludes Thomas à Kempis, "you desire consolation in every labor, have recourse to Mary; invoke the name of Mary, honor Mary, recommend yourselves to Mary, rejoice with Mary, weep with Mary, pray with Mary, walk with Mary, seek Jesus with Mary; in fine, desire to live and die with Jesus and Mary. By acting thus you will always advance in the ways of God, for Mary will most willingly pray for you, and the Son will most certainly grant all that his Mother asks." St. Camillus of Lellis also recommended his religious, in the strongest terms, to

remind the dying frequently to invoke the names of Jesus and Mary. This was his own custom when attending others; but oh, how sweetly did he practise it himself on his death-bed, for then he pronounced the beloved names of Jesus and Mary with such tenderness that he inflamed even those who heard him with love, and at length, with his eyes fixed on their venerated images, and his arms in the form of a cross, the saint breathed forth his soul with an air of holiness and in the midst of heavenly peace, and in the very moment that he was pronouncing those sweet names.

"The invocation of the sacred names of Jesus and Mary," says Thomas à Kempis, "is a short prayer which is as sweet to the mind, and as powerful to protect those who use it against the enemies of their salvation, as it is easy to remember." "Yes, truly blessed is he who loves thy sweet name, O Mother of God! for," he continues, "thy name is so glorious and admirable, that no one who remembers it has any fears at the hour of death." Such is its power that none of those who invoke it at the hour of death fear the assaults of their enemies.

Oh, that we may end our lives as did the Capuchin Father, Fulgentius of Ascoli, who expired singing, "O Mary, O Mary, the most beautiful of creatures! let us depart together;" or accord-

ing to the annals of the Order, like Blessed Henry the Cistercian, who expired in the very moment that he was pronouncing the most sweet name of Mary.

Let us then, O devout reader, beg God to grant us that at death the name of Mary may be the last word on our lips. This was the prayer of St. Germanus: "May the last movement of my tongue be to pronounce the name of the Mother of God!" O sweet, O safe is that death which is accompanied and protected by so saving a name; for God only grants the grace of invoking it to those whom he is about to save.

And to conclude with the tender prayer of St. Bonaventure: "I ask thee, O Mary, for the glory of thy name, to come and meet my soul when it is departing from this world, and to take it in thine arms." "Disdain not, O Mary," the saint continues, "to come then and comfort me with thy presence. Be thyself my soul's ladder and way to heaven. Do thou thyself obtain for it the grace of forgiveness and eternal repose." He then concludes, saying, "O Mary, our advocate, it is for thee to defend thy clients, and to undertake their cause before the tribunal of Jesus Christ."

Example.

The author of the *Glories of Mary*, St. Alphonsus Liguori, founder of the Congregation of the Holy

Redeemer, seems to have been given by Providence in these latter days as a model of the most sublime virtues, especially as a model of devotion to our blessed Lady. Even as a youth he never let a day pass without visiting a church or an altar dedicated to the Blessed Virgin. He fasted on Saturdays in her honor, and prepared for her feasts for several days by pious devotions. The Rosary was his daily prayer. Whenever the hour struck, he recited the Angelus, no matter where he was, for he esteemed this prayer above all others. Whenever he went out and whenever he came back he knelt down before an image of Mary and commended himself to her care. Later when he became Bishop of St. Agatha, he preached a sermon in honor of the Blessed Virgin every Saturday. His writings alone would be an everlasting testimony to his love of Mary. His faith, although assailed by great temptations, remained so steadfast because he always called upon the holy names of Jesus and Mary. He esteemed very highly the blessing of having been born into the Catholic Church, and wished to spread the knowledge of the true Church among the infidels. His faith in God and Mary was wonderful and sustained him in the appalling difficulties that he had met with in leaving the world and founding his order. One day when his soul was depressed and disconsolate, friends sought to comfort him by pointing to the good he had done. He answered: "Not in my works do I trust, but in the infinite mercy of our Saviour and the intercession of his holy Mother." When dying he was shown a picture of the Blessed Mother. Full of joy he pressed it to his breast and held fast to it until his soul passed to God.

Prayer.

O great Mother of God and my Mother Mary, it is true that I am unworthy to name thee, but thou, who lovest me and desirest my salvation, must, notwithstanding the impurity of my tongue, grant that I may always invoke thy most holy and powerful name in my aid, for thy name is the succor of the living and the salvation of the dying. Ah, most pure Mary, most sweet Mary, grant that henceforth thy name may be the breath of my life. O Lady, delay not to help me when I invoke thee, for in all the temptations which assail me, and in all my wants, I will never cease calling upon thee, and repeating again and again Mary, Mary. Thus it is that I hope to act during my life, and more particularly at death, that after that last struggle I may eternally praise thy beloved name in heaven, O clement, O pious, O sweet Virgin Mary. My own dear Mary, O my beloved Jesus, may your most sweet names reign in my heart, and in all hearts. Grant that I may forget all others to remember, and always invoke, your adorable names alone. Ah! Jesus my Redeemer, and my Mother Mary, when the moment of death comes, when I must breathe forth my soul and leave this world, deign, through your merits, to grant that I may then pronounce my last words, and that they may be, "I love Thee, O Jesus; I love thee, O Mary; to you do I give my heart and my soul."

THE VIRTUES OF THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

St. Augustine says that to obtain with more certainty and in greater abundance the favor of the saints, we must imitate them; for when they see us practise their virtues, they are more excited to pray for us. The Queen of saints and our principal advocate, Mary, has no sooner delivered a soul from Lucifer's grasp and united it to God, than she desires that it should begin to imitate her, otherwise she cannot enrich it with the graces that she would wish, seeing it so opposed to her in conduct. Therefore Mary calls those blessed who with diligence imitate her life: *Now, therefore, children, hear me; blessed are they that keep my ways.* (Prov. viii. 32.)

Whosoever loves, resembles the person loved, or endeavors to become like that person; according to the well-known proverb, "Love either finds or makes its like." Hence St. Sophronius exhorts us to endeavor to imitate Mary, if we love her, because this is the greatest act of homage that we can offer her. "My beloved children," the saint says, "serve Mary, whom you love; for you then truly love her, if you endeavor to imitate her whom you love." Richard of St. Laurence says "that those are and can call themselves true children of Mary who strive to imitate her life."

Although there is little recorded in the Gospels of Mary's virtues in detail, yet when we learn from them that she was full of grace, this alone gives us

to understand that she possessed all virtues in a heroic degree. St. Ambrose says, "Mary was such that her life alone was a model for all." And then he concludes in the following words: "Let the virginity and life of Mary be to you as a faithful image, in which the form of virtue is resplendent. Thence learn how to live, what to correct, what to avoid, and what to retain." Humility being the foundation of all virtues, as the holy Fathers teach, let us in the first place consider how great was the humility of the Mother of God.

I.

The Humility of Mary.

"Humility," says St. Bernard, "is the foundation and guardian of virtues;" and with reason, for without it no other virtue can exist in a soul. This beautiful and so necessary virtue was unknown in the world; but the Son of God himself came on earth to teach it by his own example, and willed that in that virtue in particular we should endeavor to imitate him: *Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart.* (Matt. xi. 29.) Mary being the first and most perfect disciple of Jesus Christ in the practice of all virtues, was the first also in that of humility, and by it merited to be exalted above all creatures. Not indeed that Mary considered herself a sinner, for humility is truth, as St. Teresa remarks, and Mary knew that she had never offended God; nor

was it that she did not acknowledge that she had received greater graces from God than all other creatures, for an humble heart always acknowledges the special favors of the Lord, to humble herself the more; but the divine Mother, by the greater light wherewith she knew the infinite greatness and goodness of God, also knew her own nothingness, and therefore, more than all others, humbled herself. As a beggar, when clothed with a rich garment which has been bestowed upon her, does not pride herself on it in the presence of the giver, but is rather humbled, being reminded thereby of her own poverty; so also the more Mary saw herself enriched, the more did she humble herself, remembering that all was God's gift.

The first effect of humility of heart is a lowly opinion of ourselves. Mary had always so humble an opinion of herself that although she saw herself enriched with greater graces than all other creatures, she never preferred herself to any one.

St. Bernardine says that "after the Son of God, no creature in the world was so exalted as Mary, because no creature in the world ever humbled itself so much as she did."

Moreover, it is an act of humility to conceal heavenly gifts. Mary wished to conceal from St.

Joseph the great favor whereby she had become the Mother of God, although it seemed necessary to make it known to him, if only to remove from the mind of her poor spouse any suspicions as to her virtue which he might have entertained on seeing her pregnant, or at least the perplexity in which it indeed threw him, for St. Joseph, on the one hand, unwilling to doubt Mary's chastity, and on the other ignorant of the mystery, *was minded to put her away privately.* (Matt. i. 19.) This he would have done had not the angel revealed to him that his spouse was pregnant by the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Again, a soul that is truly humble refuses her own praise; and should praises be bestowed on her, she refers them all to God. Behold, Mary is disturbed at hearing herself praised by St. Gabriel; and when St. Elizabeth said, *Blessed art thou among women . . . and whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? . . . blessed art thou that hast believed* (Luke i. 42), Mary referred all to God, and answered in that humble Canticle, *My soul doth magnify the Lord* (ib. 46, 47), as if she had said: "Thou dost praise me, Elizabeth; but I praise the Lord, to whom alone honor is due: thou wonderest that I should come to thee, and I wonder at the divine goodness in which alone my spirit exults:" *and*

my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. Thou praisest me because I have believed; I praise my God because he hath been pleased to exalt my nothingness: *because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid.* It is also a part of humility to serve others. Mary did not refuse to go and serve Elizabeth for three months.

Those who are humble are retiring, and choose the last places; and therefore Mary, remarks St. Bernard, when her Son was preaching in a house, as it is related by St. Matthew, wishing to speak to him, would not of her own accord enter, but "remained outside, and did not avail herself of her maternal authority to interrupt him."

In fine, those who are humble, love to be contemned; therefore we do not read that Mary showed herself in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when her Son was received by the people with so much honor; but, on the other hand, at the death of her Son she did not shrink from appearing on Calvary through fear of the dishonor which would accrue to her when it was known that she was the Mother of him who was condemned to die an infamous death as a criminal.

There can be no doubt, as St. Gregory of Nyssa remarks, that of all virtues there is perhaps none the practice of which is more difficult to our nature, corrupted as it is by sin, than that of

humility. But there is no escape; we can never be true children of Mary if we are not humble. "If," says St. Bernard, "thou canst not imitate the virginity of this humble Virgin, imitate her humility." She detests the proud, and invites only the humble to come to her: *Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me.* (Prov. ix. 4.)

Then, O my Queen, I can never be really thy child unless I am humble; but dost thou not see that my sins, after having rendered me ungrateful to my Lord, have also made me proud? O my Mother, do thou supply a remedy. By the merit of thy humility obtain that I may be truly humble, and thus become thy child. Amen.

II.

Mary's Charity towards God.

St. Anselm says that "wherever there is the greatest purity, there is also the greatest charity." The more a heart is pure, and empty of itself, the greater is the fulness of its love towards God. The most holy Mary, because she was all humility, and had nothing of self in her, was filled with divine love, so that "her love towards God surpassed that of all men and angels," as St. Bernardine writes. Therefore St.

Francis de Sales with reason called her "the Queen of love."

Who has ever fulfilled as she did that first commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart?* (Matt. xxii. 37.) In her divine love was so ardent that no defect of any kind could have access to her. "Divine love," says St. Bernard, "so penetrated and filled the soul of Mary that no part of her was left untouched; so that she loved with her whole heart, with her whole soul, with her whole strength, and was full of grace." Therefore Mary could well say, My Beloved has given himself all to me, and I have given myself all to him: *My Beloved to me, and I to him.* (Cant. ii. 16.)

God, who is love, came on earth to enkindle in the hearts of all the flame of his divine love; but in no heart did he enkindle so much as in that of his Mother; for her heart was entirely pure from all earthly affections, and fully prepared to burn with this blessed flame. Thus St. Sophronius says that "divine love so inflamed her that nothing earthly could enter her affections; she was always burning with this heavenly flame, and, so to say, inebriated with it." Hence the heart of Mary became all fire and flames, as we read of her in the sacred Canticles: *The lamps thereof are fire and flame* (Cant. viii. 6); fire burning within

through love, as St. Anselm explains it; and flames shining without by the example she gave to all in the practice of virtues. Yes, for St. Ildephonsus said that "the Holy Ghost heated, inflamed, and melted Mary with love, as fire does iron; so that the flame of this Holy Spirit was seen, and nothing was felt but the fire of the love of God." St. Thomas of Villanova says that the bush seen by Moses, which burnt without being consumed, was a real symbol of Mary's heart.

But since Mary loves God so much, there can be nothing that she so much requires of her clients as that they also should love him to their utmost. And because Mary was all on fire with the love of God, all who love and approach her are inflamed by her with this same love; for she renders them like unto herself.

Ah, Mary, thou Queen of love, of all creatures the most amiable, the most beloved, and the most loving, as St. Francis de Sales addressed thee—my own sweet Mother, thou wast always and in all things inflamed with love towards God; deign, then, to bestow at least a spark of it on me. Thou didst pray thy Son for the spouses whose wine had failed: *They have no wine.* (John ii. 3.) And wilt thou not pray for us, in whom the love of God, whom we are under such obligations to love, is wanting? Say also, "They have no love," and

obtain us this love. This is the only grace for which we ask. O Mother, by the love thou bearest to Jesus, graciously hear and pray for us. Amen.

III.

Mary's Charity towards her Neighbor.

Love towards God and love towards our neighbor are commanded by the same precept: *And this commandment we have from God, that he who loveth God love also his brother.* (I. John iv. 21.) St. Thomas says that the reason for this is that he who loves God loves all that God loves. St. Catharine of Genoa one day said, "Lord, Thou willest that I should love my neighbor, and I can love none but Thee." God answered her in these words: "All who love me love what I love."

So great was Mary's charity when on earth that she succored the needy without even being asked; as was the case at the marriage-feast of Cana, when she told her Son that family's distress and asked him to work a miracle. O, with what speed did she fly when there was question of relieving her neighbor! When she went to the house of Elizabeth to fulfil an office of charity, *she went into the hill country with haste.* (Luke i. 39.) She could not, however, more fully display the great-

ness of her charity than she did in the offering which she made of her Son to death for our salvation. On this subject St. Bonaventure says "Mary so loved the world as to give her only begotten Son."

"Nor has this love of Mary for us," says St. Bonaventure, "diminished now that she is in heaven, but it has increased; for now she better sees the miseries of men." Blessed is he, says the divine Mother, who listens to my instructions, pays attention to my charity, and, in imitation of me, exercises it himself towards others: *Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.* (Rev. 1. 6, c. 26.) St. Gregory Nazianzen assures us that "there is nothing by which we can with greater certainty gain the affection of Mary than by charity towards our neighbor." Therefore, as God exhorts us, saying, *Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful* (Luke vi. 36), so also does Mary seem to say to all her children, "Be ye merciful, as your Mother also is merciful." It is certain that our charity towards our neighbor will be the measure of that which God and Mary will show us: *Give, and it shall be given to you. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.* (Luke vi. 38.) St. Methodius used to say, "Give to the

poor and receive paradise." For the Apostle writes that charity towards our neighbor renders us happy both in this world and in the next: *But piety is profitable to all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* (I. Tim. iv. 8.) St. John Chrysostom, on these words of Proverbs, *He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord* (Prov. xix. 17), makes a remark to the same effect, saying, "He who assists the needy makes God his debtor."

O Mother of mercy, thou art full of charity for all; forget not my miseries; thou seest them full well. Recommend me to God, who denies thee nothing. Obtain for me the grace to imitate thee in holy charity, as well towards God as towards my neighbor. Amen.

IV.

Mary's Faith.

As the Blessed Virgin is the Mother of holy love and hope, so also is she the Mother of faith: *I am the Mother of fair love, and of fear, and of knowledge, and of holy hope.* (Ecclus. xxiv. 24.) And with reason is she so, says St. Irenæus; for "the evil done by Eve's incredulity was remedied by Mary's faith." Richard, on the words of St. Paul, *for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by*

the believing wife, also says that "Mary is the believing woman by whose faith the unbelieving Adam and all his posterity are saved." Hence, on account of her faith, Elizabeth called the holy Virgin blessed: *Blessed art thou that hast believed because those things shall be accomplished in thee that were spoken by the Lord.* (Luke i. 45.) And St. Augustine adds that Mary was rather blessed by receiving the faith of Christ than by conceiving the flesh of Christ.

Father Suarez says that the most holy Virgin had more faith than all men and angels. She saw her Son in the crib of Bethlehem, and believed him the Creator of the world. She saw him fly from Herod, and yet believed him the King of kings. She saw him born and believed him eternal. She saw him poor and in need of food, and believed him the Lord of the universe. She saw him lying on straw, and believed him omnipotent. She observed that he did not speak, and she believed him infinite wisdom. She heard him weep, and believed him the joy of paradise. In fine, she saw him in death, despised and crucified, and, although faith wavered in others, Mary remained firm in the belief that he was God. On these words of the Gospel, *there stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother* (John xix. 25), St. Antoninus says, "Mary stood, supported by her faith, which she retained firm in the

divinity of Christ." And for this reason it is, the saint adds, that in the office of *Tenebræ* only one candle is left lighted. St. Leo, on this subject, applies to our blessed Lady the words of Proverbs, *Her lamp shall not be put out in the night.* (Prov. xxxi. 18.) And on the words of Isaias, *I have trodden the wine-press alone* (Is. lxiii. 3), St. Thomas remarks that the prophet says "a man," on account of the Blessed Virgin, in whom faith never failed. Hence Blessed Albert the Great assures us that "Mary then exercised perfect faith; for even when the disciples were doubting she did not doubt."

St. Ildephonsus exhorts us to imitate Mary's faith. But how can we do so? Faith, at the same time that it is a gift, is also a virtue. It is a gift of God, inasmuch as it is a light infused by him into our souls; and a virtue, inasmuch as the soul has to exercise itself in the practice of it. Hence faith is not only to be the rule of our belief, but also that of our actions; therefore St. Gregory says, "He truly believes who puts what he believes into practice;" and St. Augustine, "Thou sayest, I believe; do what thou sayest, and it is faith." This is to have a lively faith, to live according to our belief: *My just man liveth by faith.* (Heb. x. 38.) Thus did the Blessed Virgin live very differently from those who do not live in accordance

with what they believe, and whose faith is dead, as St. James declares, *Faith without works is dead.* (James ii. 26.)

Diogenes sought for a man on earth; but God, amongst the many faithful, seems to seek for a Christian, for few there are who have good works; the greater part have only the name of Christian. To such as these should be applied the words once addressed by Alexander to a cowardly soldier who was also named Alexander: "Either change thy name or change thy conduct." But as Father Avila used to say, "It would be better to shut up these poor creatures as madmen, believing, as they do, that an eternity of happiness is prepared for those who lead good lives, and an eternity of misery for those who lead bad ones, and who yet live as if they believed nothing." St. Augustine therefore exhorts us to see things with the eyes of Christians, that is to say, with eyes which look at all in the light of faith; for, as St. Teresa often said, all sins come from a want of faith. Let us therefore entreat the most holy Virgin, by the merit of her faith, to obtain us a lively faith. "O Lady, increase our faith."

V.

Mary's Hope.

Hope takes its rise in faith; for God enlightens us by faith to know his goodness and the promises he has made, that by this knowledge we may rise by hope to the desire of possessing him. Mary then, having had the virtue of faith in its highest degree, had also hope in the same degree of excellence; and this made her say with David: *But it is good for me to adhere to my God, to put my hope in the Lord God.* (Ps. lxxii. 28.) For she was always perfectly detached from earthly affection, looking upon the world as a desert, and therefore in no way relying either on creatures or on her own merits, but relying only on divine grace, in which was all her confidence, she always advanced in the love of God. The most holy Virgin gave a clear indication of the greatness of her confidence in God, in the first place, when she saw the anxiety of her holy spouse St. Joseph. Unable to account for her wonderful pregnancy, he was troubled at the thought of leaving her; *but Joseph . . . minded to put her away privately.* (Matt. i. 19.) It appeared then necessary, as we have elsewhere remarked, that she should discover the hidden mystery to St. Joseph; but no. she would not herself manifest the grace she had

received; she thought it better to abandon herself to divine Providence, in the full confidence that God himself would defend her innocence and reputation.

Mary again showed her confidence in God when she knew that the time for the birth of Our Lord approached, and was yet driven even from the lodgings of the poor in Bethlehem, and obliged to bring forth in a stable: *and she laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inn.* (Luke ii. 7.) She did not then let drop a single word of complaint, but abandoning herself to God, she trusted that he would there assist her.

The divine Mother also showed how great was her confidence in divine Providence when she received notice from St. Joseph that they must fly into Egypt. On that very night she undertook so long a journey to a strange and unknown country without provisions, without money, accompanied only by her infant Jesus and her poor spouse, *who arose and took the Child and his Mother by night, and retired into Egypt.* (Matt. ii. 14.)

But much more did she show her confidence when she asked her Son for wine at the marriage-feast of Cana; for when she had said, *They have no wine,* Jesus answered her, *Woman, what is it to thee and to me? My hour is not yet come.* (John

ii. 3.) After this answer, which seemed an evident refusal, her confidence in the divine goodness was such that she desired the servants to do whatever her Son told them; for the favor was certain to be granted: *Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye.* It indeed was so: Jesus Christ ordered the vessels to be filled with water, and changed it into wine.

Let us, then, learn from Mary to have that confidence in God which we ought always to have, but principally in the great affair of our eternal salvation—an affair in which it is true that we must co-operate; yet it is from God alone that we must hope for the grace necessary to obtain it. We must distrust our own strength and say with the Apostle, *I can do all things in him who strengtheneth me.* (Phil. iv. 13.)

Ah, my most holy Lady, Ecclesiasticus tells me that thou art *the Mother of holy hope;* and the holy Church that thou art our hope. For what other hope, then, need I seek? Thou, after Jesus, art all my hope.

VI.

Mary's Chastity.

Since the fall of Adam, the senses being rebellious to reason, chastity is of all virtues the one

that is the most difficult to practise. St. Augustine says: "Of all the combats in which we are engaged, the most severe are those of chastity; its battles are of daily occurrence, but victory is rare." May God be ever praised, however, who in Mary has given us a great example of this virtue.

"With reason," says Blessed Albertus Magnus, "is Mary called the Virgin of virgins; for she, without the counsel or example of others, was the first who offered her virginity to God." Thus did she bring all virgins who imitate her to God, as David had already foretold: *After her shall virgins be brought . . . into the temple of the King.* (Ps. xliv. 15.) Therefore does St. Ambrose call Mary "the standard-bearer of virginity."

St. Gregory of Nyssa says that so much did the Blessed Virgin love this virtue that, to preserve it, she would have been willing to renounce even the dignity of Mother of God. This we may conclude from her answer to the archangel, *How shall this be done, because I know not man?* (Luke i. 34) and from the words she afterwards added, *Be it done to me according to thy word* (ib. 38), signifying that she gave her consent on the condition that, as the angel had assured her, she should become a mother only by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost.

St. Ambrose says that "whoever has preserved chastity is an angel, and that he who has lost it is a devil." Our Lord assures us that those who are chaste become angels: *They shall be as the angels of God in heaven.* (Matt. xxii. 30.) But the impure become as devils, hateful in the sight of God. Seldom, as we have already said with St. Augustine, is a victory gained over this vice. But why? It is because the means by which it may be gained are seldom made use of.

These means are three, according to Bellarmine and the masters of a spiritual life: fasting, the avoidance of dangerous occasions, and prayer.

1. By fasting is to be understood especially mortification of the eyes and of the appetite. It is said that from her very childhood the modesty of the Blessed Virgin was such that it filled every one who saw her with astonishment.

2. The second means is to fly the occasions of sin: *He that is aware of the snares shall be secure.* (Prov. xi. 15.) Mary fled as much as possible from the sight of men; and therefore St. Luke remarks that in going to visit St. Elizabeth, *she went with haste into the hill country.* An author observes that the Blessed Virgin left St. Elizabeth before St. John was born, as we learn from the same Gospel, where it is said that *Mary abode*

with her about three months, and she returned to her own house. Now Elizabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son. (Luke i. 56.) And why did she not wait for this event? It was that she might avoid the conversations and visits which would accompany it.

3. The third means is prayer. *And as I knew,* said the Wise Man, *that I could not otherwise be continent except God gave it . . . I went to the Lord and besought him.* (Wisd. viii. 21.) The Blessed Virgin revealed to St. Elizabeth of Hungary that she acquired no virtue without effort and continual prayer. St. John Damascene says that Mary "is pure and a lover of purity." Hence she cannot endure those who are unchaste. But whoever has recourse to her will certainly be delivered from this vice, if he only pronounces her name with confidence.

O Mary, O most pure dove, how many are now in hell on account of this vice! Sovereign Lady, obtain us the grace always to have recourse to thee in our temptations, and always to invoke thee, saying, "Mary, Mary, help us." Amen.

VII.

Mary's Poverty.

Our most loving Redeemer, that we might learn from him to despise the things of the world, was pleased to be poor on earth: *Being rich*, says St. Paul, *he became poor for your sake, that through his poverty you might be rich.* (II. Cor. viii. 9.) Therefore doth Jesus Christ exhort each one who desires to be his disciple, *If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast, and give to the poor . . . and come, follow me.* (Matt. xix. 21.)

Behold Mary, his most perfect disciple, who indeed imitated his example. Father Canisius proves that Mary could have lived in comfort on the property she inherited from her parents, but she preferred to remain poor, and reserving only a small portion for herself, distributed the rest in alms to the temple and the poor.

The gifts received from the holy Magi cannot certainly have been of small value; but we are assured by St. Bernard that she distributed them to the poor through the hands of St. Joseph. That the divine Mother immediately disposed of these gifts is also evident from the fact that at her purification in the Temple she did not offer a lamb, which was the offering prescribed in Leviti-

cus for those who could afford it, *for a son she shall bring a lamb* (Lev. xii. 6); but she offered two turtle-doves, or two pigeons, which was the oblation prescribed for the poor: *And to offer a sacrifice, according as it was written in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.* (Luke ii. 24.)

Out of love for poverty she did not disdain to marry St. Joseph, who was only a poor carpenter, and afterwards to maintain herself by the work of her hands, spinning or sewing, as we are assured by St. Bonaventure. In a word, she always lived poor, and she died poor; for at her death we do not know that she left anything but two poor gowns, to two women who had served her during her life, as it is recorded by Metaphrastes and Nicephorus.

St. Philip Neri used to say that "he who loves the things of the world will never become a saint." We may add what St. Teresa said on the same subject, that "it justly follows that he who runs after perishable things should also himself be lost." But, on the other hand, she adds that the virtue of poverty is a treasure which comprises in itself all other treasures. She says the "virtue of poverty;" for, as St. Bernard remarks, this virtue does not consist only in being poor, but in loving poverty. Therefore did Jesus

Christ say, *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (Matt. v. 3.) They are blessed because they desire nothing but God, and in God they find every good; in poverty they find their paradise on earth, as St. Francis did when he exclaimed, "My God and my all."

Let us, then, as St. Augustine exhorts us, "love that one good in which all good things are found," and "when we have to suffer from poverty, let us console ourselves," says St. Bonaventure, "with the thought that Jesus and his Mother were also poor like ourselves."

Ah, my most holy Mother, thou hadst indeed reason to say that in God was thy joy: *and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;* for in this world thou didst desire and love no other good but God. *Draw me after thee.* O Lady, detach me from the world that I may love him alone, who alone deserves to be loved. Amen.

VIII.

Mary's Obedience.

When the angel Gabriel announced to Mary God's great designs upon her, she, through love for obedience, would only call herself a handmaid: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord.* (Luke i. 38.) "Yes," says St. Thomas of Villanova, "for this faithful handmaid never, in either thought

or word or deed, contradicted the Most High; but, entirely despoiled of her own will, she lived always and in all things obedient to that of God." She herself declared that God was pleased with her obedience, when she said, *He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid;* for in prompt obedience it is that the humility of a servant, properly speaking, consists. St. Irenæus says that by her obedience the divine Mother repaired the evil done by Eve's disobedience: "As Eve, by her disobedience, caused her own death and that of the whole human race, so did the Virgin Mary, by her obedience, become the cause of her own salvation and of that of all mankind." Mary's obedience was much more perfect than that of all other saints; since all men, on account of original sin, are prone to evil and find it difficult to do good; but not so the Blessed Virgin. St. Bernardine writes that "because Mary was free from original sin, she found no obstacle in obeying God; she was like a wheel, which was easily turned by every inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Hence," continues the same saint, "her only object in this world was to keep her eyes constantly fixed on God, to discover his will, and, when she had found out what he required, to perform it."

Mary well proved how ready she was to obey in all things, in the first place when, to please

God, she obeyed even the Roman emperor, and undertook the long journey of at least seventy miles to Bethlehem in such poverty that she had to give birth to her Son in a stable. She showed equal obedience in undertaking, on the very same night on which she had notice of it from St. Joseph, the longer and more difficult journey into Egypt. But above all she showed her heroic obedience when, to obey the divine will, she offered her Son to death. So that, as the venerable Bede tells us, Mary was indeed blessed in becoming the Mother of God, but that she was much more so in always loving and obeying the divine will.

Our own sweet Queen, then, and Mother, intercede with Jesus for us; by the merit of thine obedience obtain that we may be faithful in obeying his will and the commands of our spiritual fathers. Amen.

IX.

Mary's Patience.

This world being a place of merit, is rightly called a valley of tears; for we are all placed in it to suffer, that we may, by patience, gain our own souls unto life eternal, as Our Lord himself says: *In your patience you shall possess your souls.* (Luke xxi. 19.) God gave us the Blessed Virgin

Mary as a model of all virtues, but more especially as an example of patience. St. Francis de Sales, amongst other things, remarks that it was precisely for this reason that at the marriage-feast of Cana Jesus Christ gave the Blessed Virgin an answer, by which he seemed to value her prayers but little: *Woman, what is that to thee and to me?* (John ii. 4.) And he did this that he might give us the example of the patience of his most holy Mother. But what need have we to seek for instances of this virtue? Mary's whole life was a continual exercise of her patience; for, as the angel revealed to St. Bridget, "as a rose grows up amongst thorns, so did the Blessed Virgin grow up amongst tribulations." Compassion alone for the Redeemer's sufferings sufficed to make her a martyr of patience. Hence St. Bonaventure says "that a crucified Mother conceived a crucified Son." In speaking of her dolors, we have already considered how much she suffered, both in her journey to Egypt and during her residence there, as also during the time she lived with her Son in the house at Nazareth. What Mary endured when present at the death of Jesus on Calvary is alone sufficient to show us how constant and sublime was her patience: *There stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother.*

If we, then, wish to be the children of Mary,

we must endeavor to imitate her in her patience: "For what," says St. Cyprian, "can enrich us with greater merit in this life, and greater glory in the next, than the patient enduring of sufferings?" God said by the prophet Osee: *I will hedge up thy way with thorns.* (Osee ii. 6.)

As a hedge of thorns protects a vineyard, so does God protect his servants from the danger of attaching themselves to the earth, by encompassing them with tribulations. Therefore St. Cyprian concludes that it is patience that delivers us from sin and from hell.

It is also patience that makes saints: *Patience hath a perfect work* (James i. 4), bearing in peace not only the crosses which come immediately from God, such as sickness, poverty, but also those which come from men—persecutions, injuries, and the rest. St. John saw all the saints bearing palm branches—the emblem of martyrdom—in their hands: *After this I saw a great multitude, and palms were in their hands* (Apoc. vii. 9); thereby denoting that all adults who are saved must be martyrs, either by shedding their blood for Christ or by patience. "Rejoice then," exclaims St. Gregory; "we can be martyrs without the executioner's sword, if we only preserve patience." "Provided only," as St. Bernard says, "we endure the afflictions of this life with pa-

tience and joy." O what fruit will not every pain borne for God's sake produce for us in heaven! Hence the Apostle encourages us, saying: *That which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory.* (II. Cor. iv. 17.)

St. Teresa's instructions on this subject are beautiful. She used to say, "Those who embrace the cross do not feel it;" and elsewhere, "that if we resolve to suffer the pain ceases." When our crosses weigh heavily upon us, let us have recourse to Mary, who is called by the Church "the Comfortress of the afflicted."

Ah, my most sweet Lady, thou who wast innocent did suffer with so much patience; and shall I, who deserve hell, refuse to suffer? My Mother, I now ask thee this favor—not, indeed, to be delivered from crosses, but to bear them with patience. For the love of Jesus, I entreat thee to obtain at least this grace for me from God; from thee do I hope for it with confidence.

X.

The Spirit of Prayer and Meditation in Mary.

There was never a soul on earth that practised in so perfect a manner as the Blessed Virgin the great lesson taught by Our Saviour, *that we ought*

always to pray and not to faint. (Luke xviii. 1.) From no one, says St. Bonaventure, can we better take example and learn how necessary is perseverance in prayer than from Mary: "Mary gave an example which we must follow and not faint;" for Blessed Albert the Great asserts that after Jesus Christ the divine Mother was the most perfect in prayer of all who ever have been or ever will be. Her prayer was continual and persevering. Moreover, she prayed with the greatest recollection of spirit, free from every distraction and inordinate affection, nor did any exterior occupation ever obscure the light of her unceasing contemplation, as we are assured by Denis the Carthusian.

Through love for prayer the Blessed Virgin was so enamored of solitude that, as she told St. Bridget, when she lived in the Temple she avoided even intercourse with her parents. On the words of the prophet Isaias: *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel* (Is. vii. 14), St. Jerome remarks that the word *virgin*, in Hebrew, properly signifies a *retired virgin;* so that even the prophet foretold the affection which Mary would have for solitude. Richard of St. Laurence says that the angel addressed her in these words: *The Lord is with thee*, on account of her great love for retirement.

For this reason St. Vincent Ferrer asserts that the divine Mother "only left her house to go to the Temple, and then her demeanor was all composed, and she kept her eyes modestly cast down." From this St. Ambrose says "that virgins should learn to avoid the world."

Philo assures us that "God only speaks to souls in solitude." God himself declares the same thing by the prophet Osee: *I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart.* (Osee ii. 14.) "O happy solitude!" exclaims St. Jerome, "in which God speaks familiarly and converses with his own." "Yes," says St. Bernard, "for solitude, and the silence which is there enjoyed, force the soul to leave the earth in thought, and meditate on things of heaven."

Most holy Virgin, do thou obtain us affection for prayer and retirement, that, detaching ourselves from the love of creatures, we may aspire only after God and heaven, where we hope one day to see thee, to praise thee, and to love thee, together with Jesus, thy Son, for ever and ever. Amen.

Come over to me, all ye that desire me, and be filled with my fruits. (Ecclus. xxiv. 26.) Mary's fruits are her virtues. "Thou hast had none

like thee, nor shalt thou have an equal. Thou alone of women hast above all pleased Christ."

Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ! Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra! salve. Ad te clamamus, exules filii Evæ. Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrymarum valle. Eia ergo, Advocata nostra! illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte. Et Jesum, benedictum Fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende, o clemens, o pia, o dulcis Virgo Maria!

Hail, O Queen, O Mother of mercy! hail our life, our comfort, and our hope. We, the banished children of Eve, cry out unto thee. To thee we send up our sighs, groaning and weeping in this vale of tears. Come, then, our advocate, and look upon us with those thy pitying eyes. And after this our banishment show us Jesus, the blessed fruit of thy womb; O merciful, O compassionate, O sweet Virgin Mary.

PART SECOND.

Practices of Devotion in Honor of the Divine Mother.

"The Queen of heaven is so gracious and liberal," says St. Andrew of Crete, "that she recompenses her servants with the greatest munificence for the most trifling devotions." Two conditions, however, there are:

The first is, that when we offer her our devotions our souls should be free from sin. In the first part of this work it was said that it was morally impossible for a client of Mary to be lost; but this must be understood on condition that he lives either without sin, or, at least, with the desire to abandon it; for then the Blessed Virgin will help him. But should any one, on the other hand, sin in the hope that Mary will save him, he thereby would render himself unworthy and incapable of her protection.

The second condition is perseverance in devotion to Mary: "Perseverance alone," says St. Bernard, "will merit a crown." The advice given by the Venerable John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus deserves our particular attention. When this holy young man was dying his companions entreated him, before he left this world, to tell them what devotion they could perform which would be most agreeable to our blessed Lady. He replied in the following

remarkable words: "Any devotion, however small, provided it is constant."

The Hail Mary.

This angelical salutation is most pleasing to the ever-blessed Virgin; for, whenever she hears it, it would seem as if the joy which she experienced when St. Gabriel announced to her that she was the chosen Mother of God, was renewed in her; and with this object in view we should often salute her with the "Hail Mary." "Salute her," says Thomas à Kempis, "with the angelical salutation; for she indeed hears this sound with pleasure."

To practise this devotion:

1. We can every morning and evening on rising and going to bed say three "Hail Marys," and add to each "Hail Mary" this short prayer: *O Mary, by thy pure and immaculate conception, make my body pure and my soul holy.*

2. We can say the "Angelus" with the usual three "Hail Marys" in the morning, at midday, and in the evening. Pope John XXII. was the first to grant an indulgence for this devotion. In 1724 Benedict XIII. granted a hundred days' indulgence to all who recite it, and a plenary indulgence once a month to those who during that

time have recited it daily as above, on condition of going to confession and receiving the holy Communion and praying for the usual intentions. Father Crasset says that Clement X. granted other indulgences to those who, at the end of each "Hail Mary," add "Thanks be to God and to Mary." Formerly, at the sound of the bell, all knelt down to say the "Angelus;" but in the present day there are some who are ashamed to do so. St. Charles Borromeo was not ashamed to leave his carriage or get off his horse to say the "Angelus" in the street, and even sometimes in the mud. In consequence of a rescript of Pius VI. of March 18, 1781, these indulgences can be obtained also by the faithful when they are where the "Angelus" is not rung or cannot be heard, if they say the prayers at the respective hours. Here we must remark that Benedict XIV. directed that in paschal time, instead of saying the "Angelus" we should say the "Regina cœli;" and that on Saturday evenings and the whole of Sunday the "Angelus" should be said standing.

3. In going out and returning to the house we can salute the Blessed Virgin with a "Hail Mary." We should reverence every image of Mary which we pass with a "Hail Mary." By command of the holy Church all the canonical hours are preceded by a "Hail Mary" and con-

cluded with it; we therefore do well to begin and end all our actions with a "Hail Mary," whether they are spiritual, such as prayer, confession, and Communion, spiritual reading, hearing sermons, and the like; or temporal, such as study, giving advice, working, going to table, to bed, etc. Happy are those actions that are enclosed between two "Hail Marys." So also should we do on waking in the morning, on closing our eyes to sleep, in every temptation, in every danger, in every inclination to anger, and the like.

4. The Blessed Virgin revealed to a devout soul that she was much pleased at being honored by her servants with the following devotion, called the Little Chaplet of the Blessed Trinity:

I render Thee thanks, O Eternal Father! for the power that Thou hast given to Mary, Thy daughter.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, etc.

I render Thee thanks, O Eternal Son! for the wisdom that Thou hast given to Mary, Thy Mother.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, etc.

I render Thee thanks, O Eternal Spirit! for the love that Thou hast given to Mary, Thy Spouse.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father, etc.

My dear reader, do this, and you will see the immense advantage that you will derive from it. Remember also that for every "Hail Mary" there is an indulgence of thirty days.

Fasting.

It is well known that Saturday is dedicated by the holy Church to Mary, because, as St. Bernard says, on that day, the day after the death of her Son, she remained constant in faith. Therefore Mary's clients are careful to honor her on that day by some particular devotion, and especially by fasting, as did St. Charles Borromeo, Cardinal Tolet, and so many others. If our health does not permit us to fast, at least we should on Saturdays content ourselves with one dish, or abstain from fruit, or something for which we have a relish. On Saturdays we should always practise some devotion in honor of our blessed Lady, receive holy Communion, or at least hear Mass, visit an image of Mary, or something of that sort. But at least on the vigils of her seven principal festivals her clients should offer her this fast or honor her otherwise as best they can.

The Visiting of the Images of Mary.

The holy Church has defended the sacred images even with the blood of martyrs; and the divine Mother has shown by prodigies how pleasing to her are the visits paid to her images. Hence all Mary's clients often visit with great affection her images and the churches dedicated in her honor. These are precisely, according to St. John Damascene, the cities of refuge in which we can find safety from temptations and the chastisements that we have deserved for our sins. Let us not think it too much to visit our Queen every day in some church or chapel, or even in our own house, where for this purpose it would be well to have in a retired part a little oratory, with her image, which should be kept decorated with drapery, flowers, tapers, or lamps; and before it we should also recite her litany, the rosary, etc.

Confraternities of our Blessed Lady.

St. Francis de Sales, with great earnestness, exhorts all seculars to join the confraternities of the Blessed Virgin. What pains, moreover, did not St. Charles Borromeo take to establish and multiply these confraternities? In his synods he

particularly recommends confessors to engage their penitents to join them. And with good reason; for these sodalities, especially those of our blessed Lady, are so many Noe's arks, in which poor seculars find a refuge from the deluge of temptations and sins which inundate the world. We, from the experience of our missions, well know the utility of these confraternities. The reason that confraternities do so much good is that in them the members acquire many weapons of defence against hell, and put in practice the requisite means of preservation in divine grace, which are seldom made use of by seculars who are not members of these confraternities. But those who frequent the meetings of their confraternities are led to think of these truths by the many meditations, lectures and sermons they there hear: *My sheep hear my voice.* (John x. 27.)

To save one's soul, prayer is necessary: *Ask, and you shall receive* (ib. xvi. 24); this the members of the confraternities do constantly. God also hears their prayers the more readily; for he has himself said that he grants graces more willingly to prayers offered up in common. In confraternities the sacraments are most likely to be frequented, both on account of the rules and the example which is given by the other members. Besides the frequentation of the sacraments in

these confraternities, many acts of mortification, humility, and charity towards the sick brethren and the poor are performed. Well would it be if this holy custom of assisting the sick poor of the place were introduced into all confraternities.

We have already said how profitable it is for our salvation to serve the Mother of God: and what else do the members do in the confraternity but serve her? From the very beginning, the brothers are consecrated to her service; they choose her in an especial manner for their sovereign Lady and Mother; hence as they are her servants and children in an especial manner, in an especial manner are they treated by her, and she protects them in life and in death. It need not be added that the object which a brother should first of all have in view should be no other than to serve God and his holy Mother, and to save his soul.

Several other Practices in Honor of Mary.

Of all devotions, there is none so pleasing to our Mother as that of having frequent recourse to her intercession, seeking her help in all our wants; for example, when we have to give or ask advice, in dangers, afflictions, and temptations; and particularly in temptations against purity. The divine Mother will then certainly deliver us, if we have recourse to her by saying the antiphon, "We fly to

thy patronage," etc.; or with the "Hail Mary;" or by only invoking the most holy name of Mary.

It is well also to know that Benedict XIII. granted fifty days' indulgence to those who pronounce the names of Jesus and Mary.

Clients of the Blessed Virgin are accustomed to give alms to the poor in honor of the divine Mother, especially on Saturdays. Let, therefore, no one think it too much to give a trifling alms every day in her honor, and to increase it on Saturdays. If they can do nothing else, they should at least perform some other act for the love of Mary; such as visiting the sick, praying for sinners, and for the souls in purgatory, etc. Works of mercy are very pleasing to the heart of this Mother of mercy.

To say or hear Mass, or to have Mass said, in honor of the Blessed Virgin. It is true that the holy sacrifice of the Mass can be offered to God alone, to whom it is offered principally as an acknowledgment of his supreme dominion, but the sacred Council of Trent says that this does not prevent it from being, at the same time, offered to God in thanksgiving for the graces granted to the saints and to his most holy Mother, that whilst we are mindful of them, they may deign to intercede for us. And for this reason at Mass we say, "That it may avail to their honor, but to our salvation."

To reverence the saints who are more nearly related to Mary, as St. Joseph, St. Joachim, and St. Anne. We should also honor the saints who were most devoted to the divine Mother, such as St. John the Evangelist, St. John the Baptist, St. Bernard, St. John Damascene the defender of her images, St. Ildephonsus the defender of her virginity, etc.

To read every day a book that treats of the glories of Mary; to preach, or at least to try to instil into all, and particularly our relatives, devotion to the divine Mother and to pray every day for the most devoted clients of Mary, both living and dead.

We should also remember the many indulgences granted by sovereign pontiffs to those who in various ways honor the Queen of heaven. 1. To whoever says, "Blessed be the holy and immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary," Pius VI. granted for each time an indulgence of one hundred days. Father Crasset says that other indulgences applicable to the souls in purgatory have been granted to those who after the word "*immaculate*" add "*and most pure.*" 2. For the Salve Regina, forty days' indulgence. 3. For the Litany of Loretto, three hundred days' indulgence. 4. To those who bow their heads on hearing the names of Jesus and Mary, twenty days' indulgence.

5. To those who say the "Our Father" and the "Hail Mary" five times, in honor of the Passion of Jesus and the sorrows of Mary, many and great indulgences.

Here, for the convenience of devout souls, are indicated other indulgences granted by sovereign pontiffs for other devotions. 1. For hearing Mass there are many indulgences. 2. For making the acts of faith, hope, charity, and contrition, with the intention of receiving the holy sacraments during life and in death, Benedict XIII. granted an indulgence of seven years and seven quarantines, and a plenary indulgence once a month applicable to the souls in purgatory, and for one's self in the hour of death to those who have made these acts every day for a month. 3. To those who meditate for half an hour every day Benedict XIV. granted many indulgences, and a plenary one once a month, on condition of approaching the sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist. 4. To those who say the prayer *Anima Christi*, three hundred days' indulgence. 5. To those who accompany the holy viaticum, five years and five times forty days, if without a wax-light; and if with one, seven years and seven quarantines; to those who cannot accompany it, but say a "Pater" and an "Ave" for the intention of the sovereign pontiff, one hundred days.

6. To those who visit the Blessed Sacrament, and say before it the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," and "Glory be," each five times, and another "Our Father," "Hail Mary," and "Glory be" for peace and union among Christian princes, for the extirpation of heresy, for the conversion of sinners, and for the triumph of holy Church, an indulgence of three hundred days, each time. 7. To priests who before saying Mass say the prayer *Ego volo celebrare missam*, fifty days. 8. To those who recite the "De profundis" on their knees at the ringing of the "Angelus," one hundred days. Those who endeavor to gain these indulgences must be careful to dispose themselves by an act of contrition. To conclude, in the beautiful words of St. Bernardine of Sienna: "O Lady, blessed amongst all women, thou art the honor of the human race and the salvation of our people. Thy merits have no limits, and thou hast full power over all creatures. Thou art the Mother of God, the sovereign Lady of the world, and the Queen of heaven. Thou art the dispenser of all graces and the ornament of the holy Church. Thou art the model of the just, the consolation of the saints, and the root of our salvation. Thou art the joy of paradise, the gate of heaven, the glory of God. Behold, we have announced thy praises. We be-

seech thee, then, O Mother of mercy, to supply for our weakness, to excuse our presumption, to accept our services, to bless our labors, by imprinting thy love in the hearts of all; that after having honored and loved thy Son on earth, we may praise him and bless him forever in heaven. Amen."

Ejaculatory Prayers.

Mother of God, remember me.

O Virgin and Mother, grant that I may always remember thee.

Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me.

O Lady, grant that Jesus may never cast me off.

O Mary, may my heart never cease to love thee, and my tongue never cease to praise thee.

O Lady, by the love which thou bearest to Jesus, help me to love him.

O Mary, be graciously pleased to make me thy servant.

O Mary, I give myself to thee without reserve; do thou accept and preserve me.

O Mary, abandon me not until death.

Hail Mary, my Mother.

Holy Mary, my Advocate, pray for me.

In thee from my whole heart I have placed my hope.

It is not possible, O Lady, that thou shouldst abandon him who has placed his hopes in thee.

Hail, Daughter of God the Father, hail, Mother of God the Son; hail, Spouse of God the Holy Ghost; hail, Temple of the whole Trinity.

The Little Office and the Litany.

As to the little office of the Blessed Virgin, which is said to have been composed by St. Peter Damian, Pius V. granted indulgences to those who recited it; and the Blessed Virgin has many times shown how acceptable this devotion is to her, as may be seen in Father Auriemma's little work.

She is also much pleased with the Litany of Loretto, for reciting which there is an indulgence of three hundred days each time; and for those who say it every day, a plenary indulgence on Mary's five principal festivals—the Immaculate Conception, Nativity, Annunciation, Purification, and Assumption, on the usual conditions. The hymn, *Ave maris Stella,* "Hail Star of the Sea," is also very pleasing to Mary; she desired St. Bridget to say it every day; but still more is she pleased with the *Magnificat;* for we then praise her in the very words in which she herself praised God.

Novenas.

Devout clients of Mary celebrate the novenas, or nine days preceding her festivals. The following devotions are some of those which may be used during the novenas:

1. We may make mental prayer in the morning and evening and a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, adding nine times the "Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father," and read every day of the novena some book that treats of her glories.

2. We may perform some external mortification; we can also fast, or at table abstain from fruit, or some favorite dish, at least a part of it. On the vigil of the feast we may fast on bread and water: but none of these things should be done without the permission of our confessor. Interior mortifications, however, are the best of all to practise during these novenas, such as to avoid looking at or listening to things out of curiosity; to remain in retirement; observe silence; be obedient; not give impatient answers; bear contradictions, and such things; which can all be practised with less danger of vanity, with greater merit, and which do not need the confessor's permission. The most useful exercise is to propose from the beginning of the novena to correct some fault into which we fall the most frequently. The devotion most dear and pleasing to Mary is to endeavor to imitate her virtues; therefore it would be well always to propose to ourselves the imitation of some virtue that corresponds to the festival; as, for example, on the Feast of her Im-

maculate Conception, purity of intention; on her Nativity, renewal of the spirit, to throw off tepidity; on her Presentation, detachment from something to which we are most attached; on her Annunciation, humility in supporting contempt; on her Visitation, charity towards our neighbor, in giving alms, or at least in praying for sinners; on her Purification, obedience to superiors; and in fine, on the Feast of her Assumption, let us endeavor to detach ourselves from the world, do all to prepare ourselves for death, and regulate each day of our lives as if it were to be our last.

3. Besides going to Communion on the day of the feast, it would be well to ask leave from our confessor to go more frequently during the novena. Father Segneri used to say that we cannot honor Mary better than with Jesus. We can offer her nothing that is more pleasing to her than the Holy Communion; for in that Holy Sacrament it is that Jesus gathers the fruit of his Passion in our soul. On the day of the feast, after Communion, we must offer ourselves to the service of this divine Mother, and ask of her the grace to practise the virtue, or whatever other grace we had proposed to ourselves, during the novena.

MEDITATIONS ON THE LITANY OF LORETTO, FOR A NOVENA TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

MEDITATION I.

I.

Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis. "HOLY MARY, PRAY FOR US."—Since, in the Litany of our blessed Lady, the Church teaches us to ask this good Mother so many times to pray for us, it will be well, before meditating upon the titles by which she is invoked, to consider the great power which her prayers have with God. Blessed is that person for whom Mary prays. Jesus rejoices when his most beloved Mother prays to him, that he may have the pleasure of granting her all she asks. Mary has only to speak, and her Son grants her all that she asks. Let us, therefore, pray to this divine Mother without ceasing if we wish to secure our eternal salvation; and let us address her in the words of St. Andrew of Crete:

"We beseech thee, therefore, O holy Virgin, to grant us the help of thy prayers with God; prayers that are more precious than all the treasures of the world; prayers that obtain for us a very great abundance of graces; prayers that confound all enemies and triumph over their strength."

II.

Sancta Maria. "HOLY MARY."—The name of Mary is a name of salvation. This name came not of earth, but from heaven: hence St. Epiphanius says that it was not given to Mary by her parents, but was imposed on her by the express will of God. Therefore it is that, after the name of Jesus, the name of Mary is above every other name; for God has filled it with grace and sweetness that every blessing may be obtained by him who names it. St. Bernard says, "O Mary, thou canst not be named without inflaming the heart of him who does so with love for thee." St. Bonaventure says that the name of Mary cannot be invoked without profit to him who does so. Above all, this name has power to overcome the temptations of hell.

Ah, my Lady, had I always invoked thee in my temptations, I should not have fallen. For the future I will never cease to invoke thee, saying, "Mary, help me; Mary, succor me." And do thou

obtain me the grace always to invoke thee in time of spiritual danger.

III.

Sancta Dei Genitrix. "HOLY MOTHER OF GOD."—If the prayers of the saints are very powerful with God, how great must be the power of those of Mary! The former are the prayers of servants, the latter the prayers of a mother and have something of the force of a command with Jesus Christ. Hence St. Antoninus concludes that it is impossible for the Son not to grant a grace for which the Mother asks. St. Bernard, therefore, exhorts us to ask for every grace which we desire from God through Mary. "Let us seek for grace, and seek it by Mary." And why? "Because she is a mother, and is always graciously heard."

O great Mother of God, pray to Jesus for me. Behold the miseries of my soul and pity me. Pray, and never cease to pray, until thou seest me safe in paradise. O Mary, thou art my hope; abandon me not. "Holy Mother of God, pray for us."

MEDITATION II.

I.

Mater divinæ gratiæ. "MOTHER OF DIVINE GRACE."—St. Anselm calls Mary "the Mother of

all graces;" and Blessed Raymond Jordano, "The treasurer of divine grace." Hence St. Bernardine of Sienna writes that "all the gifts and graces that we receive from God are dispensed by the hands of Mary, to whom, when, and as she pleases." This she herself says: *With me are riches . . . that I may enrich them that love me.* (Prov. viii. 18.) "Our Lord has deposited all the riches of his graces in my hands that I may enrich those who love me."

Then, my Queen, if I love thee, I no longer shall be poor as I am. After God, I love thee above all things; do thou obtain me greater tenderness and love for thy goodness. St. Bonaventure tells me that all whom thou willest are saved; therefore will I address thee with the same saint, "O salvation of all who call upon thee, save me from hell:" but first of all, save me from sin, which alone can take me to hell.

II.

Mater purissima. "MOTHER MOST PURE."—This Virgin Mother, all fair and pure, renders all her servants pure and chaste. St. Ambrose writes that when Mary was on earth her presence alone inspired all those who looked at her with a love of purity. She was called a lily amongst thorns: *As the lily among thorns, so is my love*

among the daughters. (Cant. ii. 2.) "All other virgins," says Denis the Carthusian, "were thorns either to themselves or to others; but the Blessed Virgin was so neither to herself nor to others, for she inspired all those upon whom she looked with pure and holy affections." Frigenius, who wrote the life of St. Thomas Aquinas, relates that it was an ordinary saying of the saint that "even the images of this chaste turtle-dove extinguish sensual desires in those who look at them with devotion." The Venerable John D'Avila says "that many who were tempted against purity had preserved themselves chaste by devotion to our blessed Lady." O, how especially powerful is the name of Mary in conquering all temptations to this vice!

O most pure Mary, deliver me from it. Grant that in my temptations I may always have recourse to thee, and invoke thee as long as the temptation lasts.

III.

Mater inviolata. "MOTHER UNDEFILED."—Mary was that spotless woman who always appeared beautiful and without stain in the eyes of God: *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.* (Cant. iv. 7.) Hence she was made the sinner's peacemaker, as she is called by

St. Ephrem, "Hail, peacemaker of the whole world!" This she also says herself in the sacred Canticles: *I am become in his presence as one finding peace.* St. Gregory says "that if a rebel appeared before his offended king to appease him, instead of doing so he would provoke him to greater anger." Hence Mary being destined to treat of peace between God and men, it was not becoming that she should appear as a sinner and as an accomplice in Adam's sin; and therefore Our Lord preserved her from every stain.

Ah, my immaculate Queen, fair dove, and the beloved of God, disdain not to cast thine eyes on the many stains and wounds of my soul: see me, and pity me. God, who loves thee so much, denies thee nothing; and thou knowest not how to refuse those who have recourse to thee. O Mary, to thee I have recourse; pity me. "Mother inviolate, pray for us."

MEDITATION III.

I.

Mater amabilis. "MOTHER MOST AMIABLE."—Richard of St. Laurence says "that Mary was amiable in the eyes of God himself." *How beautiful art thou, my love! how beautiful thou art!* (Cant. iv. 1.) Hence he called her his only dove,

to the Mother redounds to the honor of the Son." Therefore Richard of St. Laurence writes that "all who honor her in this world will be honored by her in the next." St. Anselm says "that as Mary, by becoming the Mother of God, was the means of the salvation of sinners, so are sinners saved by proclaiming her praises." All cannot be preachers, but all can praise her and speak to relatives and friends in familiar conversation of the merits of Mary, of her powers and mercy, and thus lead them to devotion towards this divine Mother.

O Queen of heaven, from this time forward I am determined to do all that I can to cause thee to be venerated and loved by all. Accept my desire and help me to execute it; in the mean time inscribe me in the number of thy servants, and never permit me again to become a slave of Lucifer.

II.

Virgo potens. "VIRGIN MOST POWERFUL."—And who amongst the saints is as powerful with God as his most holy Mother? She obtains all that she pleases. "Thou willest," says St. Bernard, "and all is done." Thus does the Son honor his beloved Mother by granting her whatever she asks, even in favor of sinners. Hence St. Germanus says, "Thou, O Mother of God, art omnip-

otent to save sinners, and needest no other recommendation with God, for thou art the Mother of true life."

O Mary, thou canst make me a saint; I rely on thee.

III.

Virgo clemens. "VIRGIN MOST MERCIFUL."—Mary is as clement and merciful toward those who have recourse to her intercession as she is powerful with God. St. Bernard says "that since the power to save us cannot be wanting to Mary, as she is the Mother of God, so neither can the will be wanting to her, for she is our Mother." Who is there that ever had recourse to Mary and was abandoned? "Let him cease to praise thy mercy," says the same St. Bernard, "who remembers having ever invoked thee without being graciously heard." St. Bonaventure writes "that Mary has so great a desire to be invoked by us that she may dispense her favors to us in greater abundance, that she is not only offended by those who speak ill of her, but also by those who neglect to ask her for grace." Thus, to obtain her help, we are not obliged to pray much to this Mother of mercy; it is enough to ask for it with confidence. "Her mercy," says Richard of St. Victor, "comes to our aid before we invoke it;" and he tells us

why: "It is because she cannot know and see our miseries without relieving them."

See, then, O Mary, see my miseries and help me. "Virgin most merciful, pray for us."

MEDITATION V.

I.

Virgo fidelis. "VIRGIN MOST FAITHFUL."—Blessed is he who by his prayers watches by the gate of Mary, as the poor wait at the door of the rich to obtain relief. *Blessed is the man,* Mary says, *that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates.* (Prov. viii. 34.) O that we were as faithful to serve this divine Mother as she is faithful to relieve us when we pray to her! Mary promises that all who serve and honor her shall be free from sin and obtain eternal life: *They that work by me shall not sin. They that explain me shall have life everlasting.* (Ecclus. xxiv. 30.) She invites all to have recourse to her, and promises them every grace that they desire: *In me is all grace of the way and of the truth; in me is all hope of life and of virtue; come over to me, all ye that desire me.* (Ib. 25.) St. Laurence Justinian applies to Mary that other text of Ecclesiasticus, *her bands are a healthful binding* (Ecclus. vi. 31); and then adds, "wherefore bands, unless to bind her ser-

vants, that they may not stray in the fields of sin." Mary binds her servants that they may not give themselves too much liberty, which would cause their ruin.

O Mother of God, in thee do I place all my confidence; thou must preserve me from falling any more into sin. My Lady, abandon me not, obtain me the grace rather to die than to lose the grace of God.

II.

Causa nostræ lætitiæ. "CAUSE OF OUR JOY."—As the dawn is a cause of joy after the darkness and gloom of night, so was the birth of Mary, who is our dawn, a cause of joy to the world which, before the coming of Jesus Christ, had been for four thousand years immersed in the darkness of sin. A holy Father says "that in the birth of Mary the dawn appeared." The dawn is the forerunner of the sun, and Mary was the precursor of the Incarnate Word, the Sun of Justice, the Redeemer, who, by his death, delivered us from eternal death. With reason the Church sings, on the Nativity of Mary, "Thy birth, O holy Mother of God, announced joy to the whole world." And as Mary was the beginning of our joy, so she is also its completion; for St. Bernard says "that Jesus Christ deposited

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the whole price of our redemption in the hands of Mary; that every grace which we receive, we may receive it from her."

O Mother of God, thou art my joy and my hope; for thou deniest thy graces to no one, and thou obtainest all that thou willest from God.

III.

Vas insigne devotionis. "VESSEL OF SINGULAR DEVOTION."—Devotion, as St. Thomas teaches, consists in the readiness with which our will conforms itself to the will of God. This was the principal virtue which rendered his most holy Mother so dear to God. That flower which always turns towards the sun is a real type of Mary. The divine will was alone the aim and satisfaction of the heart of Mary; as she herself proclaimed: *My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.*

O blessed art thou my Lady, who wast always, and in all, united to the divine will. Obtain for me the grace to spend the rest of my life in constant conformity to the will of God.

IV.

Turris eburnea. "TOWER OF IVORY."—Thus is Mary also called, *Thy neck is as a tower of ivory.* (Cant. vii. 4.) Mary is called a neck, for she is the mystic neck through which the vital spirits,

that is, the divine help which preserves in us the life of grace, are transmitted from Jesus Christ the Head to us the faithful, who are members of the mystic body of the Church. St. Bernardine says: "The life-giving graces flow from Christ the Head, through the Blessed Virgin, into his mystic body." The saint then adds "that from the time when Mary conceived the Incarnate Word, she received the great honor from God that no one should receive any grace otherwise than through her hands." In fine, ivory is greatly esteemed and is strong. Hence the Abbot Rupert writes of Mary "that as a tower of ivory she is beloved by God and terrible to the devil."

Then, O my sovereign Lady, because thou art so beloved of God, thou canst obtain us every grace; and because thou art terrible to the evil spirits, thou canst deliver us from all their snares. Have mercy on us, who glory in living under thy protection.

MEDITATION VI.

I.

Domus aurea. "House of Gold."—Gold is a symbol of love. Therefore Blessed Albert the Great calls Mary "a golden temple of charity." And with reason; for St. Thomas says that "as

all in the Temple was covered with gold, so was everything in the beautiful soul of Mary filled with sanctity." Mary was the house of gold which Eternal Wisdom, that is, the divine Word, chose for his dwelling on earth: *Wisdom hath built herself a house.* (Prov. ix. 1.) "This House of gold," says Richard of St. Laurence, "is so rich that it can relieve all our wants."

O Mary, thou lovest God so much, and therefore thou desirest to see him loved by all. This is the grace which above all others I ask of thee, and which I hope from thee; obtain me great love for God.

MEDITATION VII.

I.

Rosa mystica. "MYSTICAL ROSE."—Of Mary it is said in the sacred Canticles that she was the enclosed Garden of God: *My sister, my spouse, is a garden enclosed.* (Cant. iv. 12.) St. Bernard writes "that Our Lord planted all the flowers which adorn the Church in this garden; and amongst others the violet of humility, the lily of purity, and the rose of charity." "A rose is red, and of a fiery color," says Blessed Raymond Jordano, "which denotes love of God and of our neighbor;" therefore on account of the ardent love

with which the heart of Mary was always inflamed towards God and us, she is called a rose. And where can we find an advocate who is more earnest in the affair of our salvation, or who loves us more than Mary? "We acknowledge," says St. Augustine of her, "that one alone is solicitous for us in heaven."

O my dear Mother, could I but love thee as thou lovest me! I will not, however, cease to do all that I can to honor and love thee. My most sweet Lady, do thou obtain for me grace to be faithful to thee.

II.

Turris Davidica. "TOWER OF DAVID."—Mary is called in the sacred Canticles the Tower of David: *Thy neck is as the tower of David; a thousand bucklers hang upon it; all the armor of valiant men.* (Cant. iv. 4.) St. Bernardine says that the tower of David stood on high, that is, on Sion; therefore Mary is called the tower of David to denote the height of the perfection of this great creature: "As Sion was a very elevated spot, so was the Blessed Virgin most exalted." Therefore of Mary it is said in the Psalms that the very beginning of her sanctity was more exalted than the mountains: *The foundations thereof are in the holy mountains* (Ps. lxxxvi. 1). St. Gregory

explains it to mean that the divine Mother was more holy in the first moment of her life than any of the saints were at the moment of their death.

Ah, my Queen and Mother, I rejoice in thy greatness, and am willing rather to sacrifice my life than that thy glory should be diminished in the least degree, were such a thing possible. O that I could only by shedding every drop of my blood cause all nations of the earth to adore thee and love thee as the great Lady which thou art!

III.

Fœderis arca. "Ark of the Covenant."—Hesychius calls Mary "an ark more spacious than that of Noe;" for in the ark of Noe only two animals of every kind were received, but under the mantle of Mary the just and sinners find place. The Blessed Virgin herself said to St. Bridget, "However much a man may have sinned, if he returns to me with a real purpose of amendment, I am ready at once to receive him; neither do I pay attention to the sins with which he is laden; but only to the good disposition in which he comes; and then I do not disdain to anoint and heal his wounds, for I am called and truly am the Mother of mercy."

O Mother of mercy, will I then say to thee, in

the words of St. Bernard, "Remember that it has never been heard of in any age that any sinner who had recourse to thee was rejected by thee." I, a miserable sinner, have recourse to thee and trust in thee.

IV.

Janua cœli. "GATE OF HEAVEN."—Mary is called the "Gate of Heaven," because, as St. Bonaventure declares, "no one can enter heaven unless by Mary, as through a door." Our Queen says: *My power is in Jerusalem.* (Ecclus. xxiv. 15.) Richard of St. Laurence adds: "Commanding what I will and introducing whom I will," I can obtain whatever I please for my clients, and introduce all whom I please into paradise. Hence St. Bonaventure writes that "those who enjoy the favor of Mary are recognized by the citizens of heaven; and those who bear her stamp, that is, have the grace to be her servants, are inscribed in the Book of Life." For this reason Bernardine de Bustis calls Mary "the Book of Life," and says that whoever, by this devotion, is written in this book is certain to be saved.

Ah, my Mother, in thee do I repose my hope of eternal salvation. I love thee; do thou save me; never allow a servant of thine who loves thee to go to blaspheme thee in hell.

MEDITATION VIII.

I.

Stella matutina. "MORNING STAR."—St. John Damascene calls Mary "the Star which indicates the rising of the sun." As the morning star precedes the sun, so does devotion towards the most blessed Virgin precede the sun of divine grace; for St. Germanus says that "devotion in a soul towards Mary is a sign either that it is already in a state of grace, or that it will very soon be so." Our Lady is also called "the Star of the Sea" by the Church; for, as St. Thomas explains it, "as mariners, in tempestuous weather, are guided by the star of the sea into port, so are souls guided by Mary over the sea of this world into paradise." Hence St. Bernard warns us, saying: "If you do not wish to be lost in the storm of temptations, turn not your eyes from this star of salvation." He then continues: "If you follow Mary, you will not go astray; if Mary protects you, you cannot fear to be lost; if Mary favors you, you will reach paradise."

II.

Salus infirmorum. "HEALTH OF THE WEAK."—Mary is called by St. Simon Stock "the medicine of sinners;" and by St. Ephrem not only

medicine, but health itself: "Robust health for those who have recourse to her." Hence those who have recourse to Mary not only find in her a remedy, but health itself; and this she herself promises to all who seek her: *He that shall find me shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.* (Prov. viii. 35.) Neither let us fear that, on account of the bad odor of our wounds, she may refuse to take care of us: she is our Mother; and as a mother does not shrink from dressing the wound of her child, neither does this celestial physician refuse to hear servants who have recourse to her. Wherefore St. Bernard says:

"O Mother of God, thou dost not disdain a sinner, however loathsome he may be: if he sends up his sighs to thee, thou wilt deliver him with thine own hand from despair."

III.

Refugium peccatorum. "Refuge of Sinners."—Thus is Mary called by St. Germanus; he says, "She is the ever-ready refuge of sinners." Yes, of all sinners; for, as the Abbot of Celles says, "she can despise no sinner, but receives all, and welcomes all, the moment they have recourse to her." Hence St. John Damascene affirms that Mary is not only the refuge of the innocent, but also of the wicked, who implore her protection:

"I am a city of refuge to all who fly to me." Therefore St. Bonaventure says to her: "Thou embracest with maternal affection a sinner who is even despised by the whole world, nor dost thou cease thine embrace until thou hast reconciled him with his judge." By this the saint gives us to understand that a sinner being hated by God is also odious and abominable to all creatures; but if he has recourse to Mary, the refuge of sinners, not only she does not despise him, but embraces him with affection, and does not leave him until her Son Jesus Christ, who is our Judge, has forgiven him.

Since, then, O my Lady, thou art the refuge of all sinners, thou art also my refuge. Thou, who despisest no one who has recourse to thee, despise me not, who recommend myself to thee: "Refuge of sinners, pray for us." O Mary, pray for us, and save us.

MEDITATION IX.

I.

Consolatrix afflictorum. "COMFORTRESS OF THE AFFLICTED."—St. Germanus says: "O Mary, who, after thy Son, is as solicitous for the whole human race as thou art? who protects us in our trials as thou dost?" Who, O Mary, watches

over our interests as thou dost? who is solicitous as thou art for us in our afflictions? "No," replies St. Antoninus; "no saint can be found who compassionates us in our miseries as does this most tender Lady, the Blessed Virgin Mary." And as the miseries which afflict us the most are disorders of the soul, Blessed Henry Suso calls Mary "the most faithful comfortress of sinners." We need only show Mary the wounds of our souls, and she immediately helps us by her prayers, and consoles us. Nay, even as Richard of St. Victor writes, her compassion anticipates our wants, and she relieves us before we invoke her. Let us say, then, with St. Bonaventure:

"O Mary, console us always, but especially at the hour of our death: come at that last hour and receive our souls, and present them thyself to thy Son, who will judge us."

II.

Auxilium Christianorum. "Help of Christians."—St. John Damascene calls Mary "the prepared and always ready help of Christians, by which they are delivered from dangers." The help of Mary is, as St. Cosmas of Jerusalem writes, "all-powerful to deliver us from sin and hell." St. Bernard, addressing Mary, says: "Thou art an invincible warrior in defence of

thy servants, fighting against the devils who assail them." For this reason she is called an army in the sacred Canticles: *thou art . . . terrible as an army set in array.* (Cant. vi. 3.)

Ah, my Queen, had I always had recourse to thee, I should never have been conquered by my enemies; henceforth thou shalt be my strength: in my temptations I will always have recourse to thee; from thee do I hope for victory.

III.

Regina Martyrum. "QUEEN OF MARTYRS."—With reason is Mary called the Queen of martyrs, for her martyrdom in the death of her Son on the cross exceeded the sufferings of all the martyrs. *There stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother.* (John xix. 25.) Mothers fly from their children when they see them dying and are unable to help them. Mary did not fly, but remained with Jesus until she saw him expire. *She stood by the cross,* and whilst Jesus was in his agony she offered the life of her Son to the Eternal Father for our salvation; but in doing so she also was in an agony, and experienced a torment greater than any death.

O my afflicted Mother, be graciously pleased, by the merit of the sorrows which thou didst endure at the foot of the cross, to obtain for me

true sorrow for my sins and love for Jesus my Redeemer; and by the sword which transpierced thy heart when thou didst see him bow down his head and expire, I beseech thee to help me at the hour of my death, and then to obtain me eternal salvation, that I may love thee with thy Jesus forever.

THE FEASTS OF MARY AND THEIR APPROPRIATE DEVOTIONS.

THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

(December 8th.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

A RECORD of this feast is found in the office of the Greek Church as far back as 406. It was then celebrated on December 9th. The Latin Church began to celebrate it about the middle of the eighth century. In the year 1047 it was kept as a holy day in England, and Anselm, Bishop of Canterbury, ordered its celebration in his diocese. At first its celebration was left to the choice of the people, but later a Council in London, in 1328, ordered it to be solemnly kept. About the same time its celebration was begun in France. In Germany St. Norbertus is said to have been the most fervent promoter of the cele-

bration of this feast. Finally, in the year 1476, Pope Sixtus IV. issued two bulls in which he ordered the whole Church to celebrate the feast and had an office composed for it, but he did not make it a universal holy day. Clement VIII. made of it a feast of the second class; Clement IX. added the octave to its celebration; and Clement XI. raised it to a holy day of obligation. Pius V. enriched it with many indulgences, and Pius IX., at a Council held in Rome on December 8, 1854, at which over two hundred bishops and prelates were present from all parts of the world, declared the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary to be one of the articles of faith of the Holy Catholic Church.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

(Novena begins November 29th and ends December 7th.)

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NOVENA.

Come, Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and kindle in them the fire of Thy love.

V. Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us Pray.

O God, Who hast taught the hearts of Thy faithful people by the light of Thy Holy Spirit, grant us, in the same Spirit, to relish what is right and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

PREPARATORY PRAYER FOR EVERY DAY OF THE NOVENA.

Virgin most pure, conceived without sin, from the first moment of thy conception fair and stainless; glorious Mary, full of grace, Mother of my God, Queen of angels and of men! I humbly venerate thee as the Mother of my Saviour, who, though he was God, taught me by his own veneration, reverence, and obedience to thee the honor and homage that I owe thee. Vouchsafe, I pray thee, to accept the novena which I dedicate to thee. Thou art the safe refuge of the penitent sinner; fit, then, it is that I should have recourse to thee. Thou art the Mother of mercy; will not, then, my miseries so manifold move thee to compassion? Mary, my sole hope after Jesus, thou canst not but accept the loving trust which I have in thee; make me worthy to be called thy son, that with confidence I may cry to thee: Show thyself a mother.

Say the "Hail Mary" nine times and the "Glory be to the Father" once, then the prayer for the day.

First Day.

Lo, at thy sacred feet I bow, Virgin immaculate, the while my heart overflows with joy in union with thy own, because from eternity thou wast the Mother-elect of the Eternal Word and wast preserved stainless from the taint of Adam's sin. Forever praised, forever blessed be the Most Holy Trinity, who in thy conception poured out upon thy soul the riches of that matchless privilege. I humbly pray thee, gracious Mother, obtain for me the grace to overcome the bitter results of original sin. Ah, yes! make me victorious over them, that I may never cease to love my God.

Then say the Litany of the Blessed Virgin or else:

V. All fair art thou, O Mary!
R. All fair art thou, O Mary!
V. The original stain is not in thee.
R. The original stain is not in thee.
V. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem.
R. Thou art the joy of Israel.
V. Thou art the honor of our people.
R. Thou art the advocate of sinners.
V. O Mary!
R. O Mary!
V. Virgin most prudent.

R. Mother most tender.

V. Pray for us.

R. Intercede for us with Our Lord Jesus Christ.

After the Litany or the above hymn say as follows:

V. In thy conception, Virgin, thou wast immaculate.

R. Pray for us to the Father, whose Son was born of thee.

Let us Pray.

O God, who through the immaculate conception of the Virgin didst prepare a worthy dwelling-place for Thy divine Son, grant that as in view of the death of that Son Thou didst preserve her from all taints, so Thou would vouchsafe unto us that, cleansed from all sin by her intercession, we too may arrive at Thine eternal glory.

O God, the Pastor and Ruler of all the faithful, graciously look upon Thy servant [N.], whom Thou hast set over Thy holy Church; grant him, we beseech Thee, by word and example so to direct those over whom Thou hast placed him that, together with the flock thou hast entrusted to his care, he may attain eternal life.

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the source of all piety, hearken to the pious prayers of Thy Church and grant that what we ask in faith

we may in deed obtain. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

The same order is to be observed on all the other days of the novena, only the prayer for the day being changed.

Second Day.

Mary, unsullied lily of heavenly purity, I rejoice with thee because from thy conception's earliest dawn thou wast full of grace and endowed with the perfect use of reason. I thank and I ever adore the Ever-blessed Trinity, who gave thee these high gifts. I am overwhelmed with shame in thy presence to see myself so poor in grace. O thou who wast filled with heavenly grace, impart some portion of it to my soul, and make me share the treasures of thy immaculate conception.

Litany, etc., *as on first day.*

Third Day.

Mary, thou mystical rose of purity, my heart rejoices with thine at the glorious triumph which thou didst gain over the infernal serpent by thy immaculate conception, and because thou wast conceived without stain of original sin. I thank and praise with my whole heart the Ever-blessed Trinity, who granted thee this glorious privilege,

and I pray thee to obtain for me strength to overcome all the wiles of the infernal foe and never to stain my soul with sin. Be thou mine, and make me, by thy protection, victorious over the common foe of our eternal welfare.

Litany, etc.

Fourth Day.

Mirror of holy purity, Mary, Virgin immaculate, great is my joy while I consider that from thy immaculate conception the most sublime and perfect virtues were infused into thy soul, and with them all the gifts of the Holy Ghost. I thank and praise the Most Holy Trinity, who bestowed on thee these high privileges. I pray thee, gentle Mother, obtain for me grace to practise virtue, and so make me worthy to become partaker of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost.

Litany, etc.

Fifth Day.

Mary, bright moon of purity, I rejoice with thee because the mystery of thy immaculate conception was the beginning of salvation for the race of man and the joy of the whole world. I thank and bless the Ever-blessed Trinity, who thus did magnify and glorify thee; and I beg of thee to obtain for me the grace so to profit by

thy dear Son's death and Passion that his precious blood may not have been shed in vain for me upon the cross, but that, after a holy life, I may reach heaven in safety.

Litany, etc.

Sixth Day.

Mary immaculate, most brilliant star of purity, I rejoice with thee because thy immaculate conception has bestowed upon the angels in paradise the greatest joy. I thank and bless the Ever-blessed Trinity, who enriched thee with this high privilege. Oh! let me, too, one day enter into this heavenly joy in the company of angels, that I may praise and bless thee, world without end.

Litany, etc.

Seventh Day.

Mary immaculate, rising morn of purity, I rejoice with thee, gazing in wonder upon thy soul confirmed in grace from the very first moment of thy conception and rendered inaccessible to sin. I thank and magnify the Ever-blessed Trinity, who chose thee from all our race for this special privilege. Holy Virgin, obtain for me utter and constant hatred of all sin above every other evil, and let me rather die than ever again fall into sin.

Litany, etc.

Eighth Day.

O spotless Sun, O Virgin Mary! I congratulate thee. I rejoice with thee because in thy conception God gave thee grace greater and more boundless than he ever shed on all his angels and all the saints, together with all their merits. I thank and marvel at the surpassing beneficence of the Ever-blessed Trinity, who conferred on thee this privilege. Oh! make me to correspond with the grace of God and never abuse it. Change this heart of mine; make me now begin to amend my life.

Litany, etc.

Ninth Day.

O living light of holiness, model of purity, Mary, immaculate Virgin and Mother! as soon as thou wast conceived thou didst profoundly adore thy God, giving him thanks that in thee the ancient curse was revoked, and blessing came again upon the sinful sons of Adam. Oh! make this blessing kindle in my heart love for God, and do thou fan this flame of love within me, that I may love him constantly, and one day in heaven eternally enjoy him, there to thank him more and more fervently for all the wondrous privileges

conferred on thee, and to rejoice with thee for thy high crown of glory.

Litany, etc.

For making the above novena an indulgence of three hundred days every day, and a plenary indulgence on any day of the novena or the eight days following it.—Pius IX., Jan. 5, 1849, Jan. 28, 1850, Nov. 26, 1876.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST.

I.

It was indeed becoming that the three divine Persons should preserve Mary from original sin.

It was becoming that the Father should do so, because Mary was his first-born daughter. As Jesus was the first-born of God, *the first-born of every creature* (Col. i. 15), so also was Mary, the destined Mother of God, always considered by him as his first-born daughter by adoption, and therefore he always possessed her by his grace: *The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his ways.* (Prov. viii. 22.) For the honor, therefore, of his Son, it was becoming that the Father should preserve his Mother from every stain of sin. It was also becoming that he should do so because he destined this his daughter to crush the head of the infernal serpent, who had seduced man, as we read in Genesis, *she shall crush thy head.* (Gen. iii. 15.) How, then, could he per-

mit that she should first be the slave of this infernal serpent? Moreover, Mary was also destined to become the advocate of sinners; therefore it was also becoming that God should preserve her from sin, that she might not appear guilty of the same fault as men for whom she was to intercede.

II.

It was becoming that the Son should have an immaculate Mother. He himself chose Mary for his Mother. It is impossible to believe that a son who could have a queen for his mother would choose a slave. How, then, can we imagine that the Eternal Word, who could have an ever-immaculate Mother, and one who had always been a friend of God, would have one defiled by sin, and at one time the enemy of God? Moreover, as an ancient author says, "the flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary." The Son of God would have felt horror to have taken flesh of a St. Agnes, a St. Gertrude, or of a St. Teresa, because these holy virgins were defiled by sin before baptism; and therefore the devil could then have reproached him with being clothed with flesh which had once been subject to him. But as Mary was always pure and immaculate, Our Lord felt no horror at becoming man in her chaste

womb. Besides, St. Thomas says that "Mary was preserved from every actual sin, even venial;" for otherwise she would not have been a becoming Mother of God; but how much less would she have been so had she been defiled by original sin, which renders the soul hateful to God?

III.

It was becoming the Holy Ghost that this his most beloved spouse should be immaculate. As men who had already fallen into sin were to be redeemed, he willed that this his spouse should be redeemed in a more noble way; that is, by being preserved from falling into sin. And since God preserved the body of Mary after her death, how much more should we believe that he preserved her soul from the corruption of sin? Hence the divine Spouse calls her in the sacred Canticles *an enclosed garden, a sealed fountain;* for an enemy never entered the blessed soul of Mary. Therefore he praised her, calling her all beautiful, always his friend, and all pure: *Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.* (Cant. iv. 7.)

Example.

A woman came to a house of the Redemptorist Fathers in Naples to let one of the Fathers know that her husband had not been to confession for

many years, and the poor creature could no longer tell by what means to bring him to his duty; for if she named confession to him he beat her. The Father told her to give him a picture of Mary Immaculate. In the evening the woman once more begged her husband to go to confession; but he as usual turned a deaf ear to her entreaties. She gave him the picture. Behold! he had scarcely received it, when he said: "Well, when will you take me to confession? for I am willing to go." The wife, on seeing this instantaneous change, began to weep for joy. In the morning he really went to church, and when the Father asked him how long it was since he had been to confession, he answered, "Twenty-eight years." The Father again asked him what had induced him to come that morning. "Father," he said, "I was obstinate; but last night my wife gave me a picture of our blessed Lady, and in the same moment I felt my heart changed, so much so that during the whole night every moment seemed a thousand years, so great was my desire to go to confession." He then confessed his sins with great contrition, changed his life, and continued for a long time to go frequently to confession to the same Father.

Prayer.

Ah, my most beautiful Lady, I rejoice in seeing thee by thy purity and thy beauty so dear to God. I thank God for having preserved thee from every stain. My Queen, since thou art so loved by the Most Holy Trinity, disdain not to cast thine eyes on my soul, which is so defiled by sin, that, seeing it, thou mayest obtain for me pardon and eternal salvation from God. Behold me, and change me. Thou, by thy sweetness, hast drawn so many hearts to thy love, draw also my heart, that henceforward

it may love no other than God and thee. Thou well knowest that I have placed all my hopes in Thee, my dear Mother; abandon me not. Help me always with thine intercession in life, and especially at the hour of my death; grant that I may die invoking and loving thee, that I may love thee forever in paradise.

LITTLE CHAPLET OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Blessed be the holy and immaculate conception of the most blessed Virgin Mary.

Our Father, *once.* Hail Mary, *four times.* Glory be to the Father, *once.*

Repeat the above three times.

Indulgence of three hundred days every time. A plenary indulgence once a month to all who shall have said this chaplet every day for a month on the day when, being truly penitent, they shall go to confession and Communion.—Pius IX., June 22, 1855.

PRAYER TO OBTAIN PURITY.

Hail Mary, etc.

My Queen, my Mother! I give myself entirely to thee, and to show my devotion to thee I consecrate to thee this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my whole being, without reserve. Wherefore, good Mother, as I am thine own, keep me, guard me as thy property and possession.

Indulgence of one hundred days once a day. A plenary indulgence once a month to all those who have said this prayer daily for a month.—Pius IX., Aug. 5, 1851.

AN ACT OF FAITH IN THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, I firmly believe in thy immaculate conception; I bless God for having granted thee this glorious privilege; I thank him a thousand times for having taught it to me by the infallible voice of the Church. Receive my heart, O immaculate Virgin! I give it up to thee without reserve; purify it, guard it, never give it back to me. Preserve it in thy love and in the love of Jesus during time and eternity.

LITTLE OFFICE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

AT MATINS.

Come, my lips, and wide proclaim
The Blessed Virgin's spotless fame.

V. O Lady, make speed to befriend me.

R. From the hands of the enemy mightily defend me.

V. Glory be to the Father, etc. Alleluia.

From Septuagesima to Easter, instead of Alleluia, is said:

Praise be to Thee, O Lord, King of everlasting glory.

Hymn.

Hail, Queen of the heavens!
Hail, Mistress of earth!
Hail, virgin most pure
Of immaculate birth!

Clear star of the morning,
In beauty enshrined!
O Lady, make speed
To the help of mankind.

Thee God in the depth
Of eternity chose,
And formed thee all fair,
As his glorious spouse;

And called thee his Word's
Own Mother to be
By whom he created
The earth, sky, and sea. Amen.

V. God elected her, and preëlected her.
R. He made her to dwell in his tabernacle.
V. O Lady, aid my prayer.
R. And let my cry come unto thee.

Let us Pray.

Holy Mary, Queen of heaven, Mother of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and Mistress of the world, who forsakest no one, and despisest no one; look upon me, O Lady, with an eye of pity, and entreat for me, of thy beloved Son, the forgiveness of all my sins; that, as I now celebrate with devout affection thy holy and immaculate conception, so, hereafter, I may receive the prize of eternal blessedness, by the grace of him whom thou, in virginity, didst bring forth, Jesus Christ Our Lord: who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth, in perfect trinity, God, world without end. Amen.

V. O Lady, aid my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto thee.

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

AT PRIME.

V. O Lady, make speed to befriend me.

R. From the hands of the enemy mightily defend me.

V. Glory be to the Father, etc. Alleluia.

Hymn.

Hail, Virgin most wise.
Hail, Deity's shrine!
With seven fair pillars,
And table divine!

Preserved from the guilt
Which hath come on us all!
Exempt, in the womb,
From the taint of the fall!

O new star of Jacob,
Of angels the queen!
O gate of the saints!
O mother of men!

To Zabulon fearful
As th' embattled array!
Be thou of the faithful
The refuge and stay. Amen.

V. The Lord himself created her in the Holy Ghost.

R. And poured her out over all his works.

V. O Lady, aid, etc. (*with the prayer as above*).

AT TIERCE.

O Lady, make speed, etc.

Hymn.

Hail, Solomon's throne!
Pure ark of the law!
Fair rainbow and bush,
Which the patriarch saw!

Hail, Gedeon's fleece!
Hail, blossoming rod!
Samson's sweet honey-comb!
Portal of God!

Well fitting it was
That a Son so divine
Should preserve from all touch
Of original sin,

Nor suffer by smallest
Defect to be stained
That Mother, whom he
For himself had ordained. Amen.

V. I dwell in the highest.
R. And my throne is on the pillar of the clouds.
V. O Lady, aid, etc. (*with the prayer as above*).

AT SEXT.

O Lady, make speed, etc.

Hymn.

Hail, virginal Mother!
Hail, purity's cell!
Fair shrine, where the Trinity
Loveth to dwell!

Hail, garden of pleasure!
Celestial balm!
Cedar of chastity!
Martyrdom's palm!

Thou land set apart
From uses profane!
And free from the curse
Which in Adam began!

Thou city of God!
Thou gate of the east!
In thee is all grace,
O joy of the blest. Amen.

V. As the lily among the thorns.

R. So is my beloved among the daughters of Adam.

V. O Lady, aid, etc. (*with the prayer as above*).

AT NONE.

O Lady, make speed, etc.

Hymn.

Hail, city of refuge!
Hail, David's high tower,
With battlements crowned
And girded with power!

Filled at thy conception
With love and with light!
The dragon by thee
Was shorn of his might.

O woman most valiant!
O Judith thrice blest!
As David was nursed
In fair Abisag's breast;

As the savior of Egypt
Upon Rachel's knee;
So the world's great Redeemer
Was cherished by thee. Amen.

V. Thou art all fair, my beloved.
R. And the original stain was never in thee.
V. O Lady, aid, etc. (*with the prayer as above*).

AT VESPERS.

O Lady, make speed, etc.

Hymn.

Hail, dial of Achaz!
On thee the true sun
Told backward the course
Which from old he had run!

And, that man might be raised,
Submitting to shame,
A little more low
Than the angels became.

Thou, rapt in the blaze
Of his infinite light,
Dost shine as the morn
On the confines of night;

As the moon on the lost
Through obscurity dawns;
The serpent's destroyer,
A lily 'mid thorns! Amen.

V. I made an unfailing light to arise in heaven.
R. And as a mist I overspread the whole earth.
V. O Lady, aid, etc. (*with the prayer as above*).

AT COMPLINE.

May Jesus Christ, thy Son, reconciled by thy prayers, O Lady, convert our hearts.

R. And turn away his anger from us.

V. O Lady, make speed to befriend me.

R. From the hands of the enemy mightily defend me.

V. Glory be to the Father, etc.

Hymn.

Hail, Mother most pure!
Hail, Virgin renowned!
Hail, Queen with the stars,
As a diadem, crowned.

Above all the angels
In glory untold,
Standing next to the King
In a vesture of gold.

O Mother of mercy!
O Star of the wave!
O Hope of the guilty!
O Light of the grave!

Through thee may we come
To the haven of rest;
And see heaven's King
In the courts of the blest! Amen.

V. Thy name, O Mary, is as oil poured out.

R. Thy servants have loved thee exceedingly.

V. O Lady, aid, etc. (*with the prayers and versicles as above*).

These praises and prayers
I lay at thy feet,
O Virgin of virgins!
O Mary most sweet!

Be thou my true guide
Through this pilgrimage here,
And stand by my side
When death draweth near.

R. Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS WHICH MAY BE SAID AFTER THE OFFICE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION.

Thou art all fair. And the stain of original sin is not in thee. Thou art the glory of Jerusalem. Thou art the joy of Israel. Thou art the honor of our people. Thou art the advocate of sinners. O Mary! O Mary! Virgin most prudent. Mother most clement. Pray for us. Intercede for us with Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ant. Thy immaculate conception, Virgin Mother of God, brought joy to the whole world; for out of thee arose the Sun of justice, Christ our God, who, lifting the curse from us, brought us blessings, and, putting death to flight, gave us life eternal.

Instead of the above-mentioned prayers, "Thou art all fair," and the Ant., "Thy immaculate conception," the following may be said:

Ant. This is the rod in which was neither knot of original sin, nor rind of actual guilt.

V. In thy conception, O Virgin, thou wast immaculate.

R. Pray for us to the Father, whose Son thou didst bring forth.

Let us Pray.

O God, who, by the immaculate conception of the Virgin, didst prepare a worthy habitation for Thy Son: we beseech Thee that, as in view of the death of that Son Thou didst preserve her from all stain of sin, so Thou wouldst enable us, being made pure by her intercession, to come unto Thee. Through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION.

(February 2d.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

Candlemas, or the Feast of the Purification, is celebrated to commemorate the taking of the forty-day-old child Jesus up to the Temple in

Jerusalem, in obedience to the law. It is believed that the Emperor Justinian first ordered the keeping of the feast in the year 542, during the ravages of a terrible plague in Constantinople. Later the feast was extended to the whole Greek Church. Baronius, however, thinks that the feast was celebrated even earlier (494) in the Western Church, by order of Pope Gelasius. The custom of holding a procession with burning candles on that day is certainly very ancient, for St. Ildephonsus of Toledo, and St. Eligius of Noyon, who both lived in the seventh century, not only mention this custom, but try to explain it. "By this procession of light," says St. Ildephonsus, "the Christian community testifies to its resolution to walk in the light of Jesus Christ and prays also for the grace to be faithful to this resolution, in order to enter that realm where there is everlasting light."

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF THE PURIFICATION.

(Novena begins January 24th and ends February 1st.)

PRAYERS.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231.*

1. Bright mirror of all virtues, holiest Mary, forty days had scarcely elapsed from thy delivery

when thou, though the purest of all virgins, didst will, according to the law, to be presented in the Temple to be purified: grant that we, like thee, may keep our hearts unstained by sin, that so we, too, may be made worthy to be presented to our God in the temple of his glory.

Hail Mary, etc.

2. Virgin most obedient, at thy presentation in the Temple thou didst will, like other women, to offer the wonted sacrifice: obtain for us that we, too, following thy example, may learn how to offer ourselves a living sacrifice to God by practising every virtue.

Hail Mary, etc.

3. Virgin most pure, in observing the precept of the law thou didst care little that men should account thee unclean: ask for us grace to keep our hearts forever pure, however blamable the world may think us.

Hail Mary, etc.

4. Virgin most holy, in offering thy divine Son to his Eternal Father, thou didst gladden all the court of heaven: present our poor hearts to God, that he, by his grace, may keep them ever free from mortal sin.

Hail Mary, etc.

5. Virgin most humble, in placing Jesus in holy old Simeon's arms, thou didst fill his soul

with heavenly joy: give our hearts into God's holy keeping, that he may fill them with his Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, etc.

6. Virgin most zealous, by redeeming thy Son Jesus according to the law, thou didst coöperate in the salvation of the world: ransom now our poor hearts from the slavery of sin, that so they may be ever pure before the face of God.

Hail Mary, etc.

7. Virgin most meek, on hearing the prophecy of Simeon foretelling thy woes, thou didst promptly bow to the good pleasure of God: enable us also to bear all troubles with patience and resignation to his divine will.

Hail Mary, etc.

8. Virgin most compassionate, when through thy divine Son thou didst fill the soul of Anna the prophetess with light, thou didst make her magnify the mercies of God by recognizing Jesus as the Redeemer of the world: enrich our souls with heavenly grace that we may largely share the fruit of the divine redemption.

Hail Mary, etc.

9. Virgin most resigned, who didst feel thy soul transfixed with sorrow when in spirit thou didst foresee all the bitter Passion of thy Son, and knowing the grief of Joseph, thy spouse, for all

thy sufferings, didst with holy words console him; pierce through and through our souls with true sorrow for our sins that we may one day have the consolation to be made partakers of thy glory in heaven.

Hail Mary, etc.

Then say the Litany, and afterward:

V. Simeon received an answer from the Holy Spirit.

R. That he should not see death until he had seen the Christ of the Lord.

Let us Pray.

Almighty, everlasting God, we pray Thy majesty that, as Thy only begotten Son was presented in the Temple in the substance of our flesh, so Thou wouldst enable us to present ourselves before Thee with clean hearts. Amen.

For making the above novena an indulgence of three hundred days each time, and a plenary indulgence on the feast itself or on any day of its octave. —Pius VII., Aug. 4 and Nov. 24, 1808; Jan. 11, 1809.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST.

I.

When the time had come in which, according to the law, Mary was to be purified in the Temple, and to present Jesus to the Eternal Father, she,

accompanied by St. Joseph, directed her steps towards Jerusalem. Joseph took two turtle-doves which were to be offered, and Mary took her beloved Infant. She took the divine Lamb to offer it to God, as a token of the great sacrifice which he would one day accomplish on the cross.

My God, I also unite my sacrifice to that of Mary; I offer Thee Thy Incarnate Son; and by his merits I beseech Thee to grant me Thy grace. I do not deserve it; but Jesus sacrificed himself to Thee to obtain it for me. For the love of Jesus, then, have mercy on me.

II.

Behold, Mary entered the Temple, and in the name of the whole human race made the oblation of her Son. But, especially on this day, Jesus offered himself to his Eternal Father. "Behold me, O Father," he said; "to Thee do I consecrate my whole life; Thou hast sent me into the world to save it: accept my blood and my life; I offer them without reserve to Thee, for the salvation of the world."

Unfortunate should I have been, my dear Redeemer, hadst Thou not satisfied the divine justice for me. I thank Thee with my whole soul, and I love Thee with my whole heart. And

whom shall I love, if I do not love a God who sacrificed his life for me?

This sacrifice was more precious in the sight of God than if all men and angels had offered him their lives. Yes, because it was in this offering of Jesus alone that the Eternal Father received infinite honor and an infinite satisfaction. Jesus Christ said one day to Blessed Angela of Foligno, "I offered myself for thee, that thou mightest offer thyself to me."

Example.

A Lutheran lady, at Augsburg in Germany, who was obstinate in her heresy, was one day passing before a Catholic chapel, and out of curiosity entered it, and saw there an image of Mary with the infant Jesus in her arms, and felt inspired to make her an offering. She went to her house and took a piece of silk, which she offered to the Blessed Virgin. On her return home this good Mother enlightened her to see the errors of her sect; she immediately went to see some Catholics, abjured heresy, and was converted to God.

Prayer.

Yes, my Jesus, since Thou hast offered Thy life to Thy Eternal Father for me, I offer my life and my entire self to Thee. Hitherto, with the greatest ingratitude, I have despised Thee; but Thou hast promised no more to remember the outrages of a sinner who repents of having offended Thee. My Jesus, I grieve for having offended Thee, and wish that I could die of grief. I was dead by sin; from

Thee I hope for life, and my life shall be to love Thee, O Infinite Good. Make me love Thee; I ask for nothing more. Dispense the riches of this world to those who desire them; I desire nothing but the treasure of Thy love. My Jesus, Thou alone art sufficient for me. O Queen and my Mother Mary, through thee do I hope for every grace.

THE FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

(Feast, Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

The arch-confraternity of the Immaculate Heart of Mary was established at Paris, in the Church of Notre Dame des Victoires, December 16, 1836. It was approved by the Pope, April 24, 1838, with the privilege of aggregating to itself other similar associations. The primary object of the Association is to pray for the conversion of sinners and of persons in error, and God has been pleased to answer its prayers in a most remarkable manner.

All that is absolutely necessary on the part of each associate is, after registration of name, to recite every day the "Hail Mary" for the intentions of the Association. The pious exercises which follow, though well suited to answer

the ends of the Association, are not strictly required.

It is also recommended—1. To communicate once a month; 2. To recite the Rosary once a week; both for the intentions of the Association. 3. To wear, as a badge, the medal of the Immaculate Conception. 4. To say often the "Memorare" prayer.

The plenary indulgences granted to the associates, with the usual conditions, are—1. On the day of admission. 2. At the hour of death. 3. On the Sunday before Septuagesima, the principal feast of the Association. 4. On the Feast of Our Lord's Circumcision. 5. On the Feasts of the Purification, Annunciation, Assumption, Conception, Dolors, and Nativity of our blessed Lady. 6. On the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. 7. On the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen. 8. On any two days of the month. 9. On the anniversary of their baptism.

There is also an indulgence of five hundred days for all the members and other persons who assist at the Masses celebrated on Saturdays in honor of the holy and immaculate heart of Mary, in the church or chapel of the Confraternity, and there pray for the conversion of sinners.

The benefits of the Association extend beyond this life; for a Mass is celebrated for the deceased

members at Notre Dame des Victoires on the first Saturday of every month.

NOVENA IN HONOR OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

(Feast, Sunday after the Octave of the Assumption.)

PRAYER.

Heart of Mary, Mother of God, our Mother; heart most amiable, delight of the ever-adorable Trinity, and worthy of all the veneration and tenderness of angels and men; heart most like the heart of Jesus, whose perfect image thou art; heart full of goodness, ever compassionate towards our miseries! vouchsafe to thaw our icy hearts and change them to the likeness of the heart of Jesus. Infuse into them the love of thy virtues; inflame them with that blessed fire with which thou dost ever burn. In thee let the holy Church find safe shelter; be thou its guardian and its ever-sweet asylum, its tower of strength, impregnable against the assaults of its enemies. Be thou the road leading to Jesus; be thou the channel whereby we receive all graces needful for our salvation. Be thou our help in need, our comfort in trouble, our strength in temptation, our refuge in persecution, our aid in danger; but especially in the

last struggle of our life, at the moment of our death, when all hell shall be unchained against us to snatch away our souls—in that dread moment, that hour so terrible, on which depends our eternity, ah! then, most tender Virgin, do thou make us feel how great is the sweetness of thy mother's heart, how great thy power with the heart of Jesus, opening to us in the very fount of mercy itself a safe refuge, that so one day we too may join thee in paradise in praising the heart of Jesus for ever and ever. Amen.

May the divine Heart of Jesus and the immaculate heart of Mary be known, praised, blessed, loved, worshipped, and glorified always and in all places. Amen.

1. Indulgence of sixty days once a day.

2. A plenary indulgence on the Feasts of the Nativity, of the Assumption and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to all those who shall have said the above prayer every day during the year when, being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they shall visit a church or an altar in any church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and pray for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

3. A plenary indulgence at the hour of death to those who during life shall have practised this pious exercise every day.

For making a novena in honor of the immaculate heart of Mary and her patronage an indulgence is granted of three hundred days each day, and a plenary indulgence during the course of the novena

or on one of the eight days immediately following it.—Pius IX., Jan. 5, 1849.

CONSIDERATIONS.

1. The Son of God died to save sinners, and we cannot imitate his charity more agreeably to him than by ever aiming at the same object.

2. Prayer is the most powerful means of drawing down from God the grace necessary for it, and is, moreover, in every one's power.

3. No intercession is so effectual as that of the Blessed Mother of God; let us therefore seek it.

4. But then we must show true devotion toward her, by imitating her virtues, particularly the purity of her heart.

5. The good example which we shall thus give will greatly forward the ends of the Association.

6. Let all the associates, therefore, encourage one another in diligence, in virtue, in devout exercises, especially in frequenting the sacraments, and ever discourage all sin and irregularity whether in word or work.

Example.

In one of the Redemptorist missions, after the sermon on the Blessed Virgin Mary, which it is always customary to preach, a very old man came to make his confession to one of the Fathers. Filled with consolation he said, "Father, our blessed Lady has granted me a grace." "What grace has she granted you?" the confessor asked. "You must

know, Father," he replied, "that for five-and-thirty years I have made sacrilegious confessions, for there is a sin which I was ashamed to confess; and yet I have passed through many dangers, have many times been at the point of death, and had I then died, I should certainly have been lost; but now our blessed Lady has touched my heart with grace to tell it." This he said weeping, and shedding so many tears, that he quite excited compassion. The Father, after hearing his confession, asked him what devotion he had practised. He replied that on Saturdays he had never failed to abstain from milk in honor of Mary, and that on this account the Blessed Virgin had shown him mercy. At the same time he gave the Father leave to publish the fact.

Prayer of St. Athanasius.

Give ear to our prayers, O most holy Virgin, and be mindful of us. Dispense unto us the gifts of thy riches, and the abundance of the graces with which thou art filled. The archangel saluted thee, and called thee full of grace. All nations call thee blessed. The whole hierarchy of heaven blesses thee; and we, who are of the terrestrial hierarchy, also address thee, saying, Hail, O full of grace, Our Lord is with thee; pray for us, O holy Mother of God, our Lady and our Queen.

LITTLE CHAPLET IN HONOR OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY.

V. Incline unto my aid, O God!

R. O Lord! make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, etc.

R. As it was, etc.

1. Immaculate Virgin, who, conceived without sin, didst direct every movement of thy most pure heart to that God who was ever the object of thy love, and who wast ever most submissive to his will, obtain for me the grace to hate sin with my whole heart, and to learn of thee to live in perfect resignation to the will of God.

Recite one "Our Father" and seven "Hail Marys."

Heart transpierced with pain and woe!
Set my heart with love aglow.

2. I marvel, Mary, at thy deep humility, through which thy blessed heart was troubled at the gracious message brought thee by Gabriel the archangel, that thou wast chosen Mother of the Son of the Most High, and through which thou didst proclaim thyself his humble handmaid; wherefore, in great confusion at the sight of my pride, I ask thee for the grace of a contrite and humble heart, that, knowing my own misery, I may obtain that crown of glory promised to the truly humble of heart.

Our Father, etc. Heart, etc.

3. Blessed Virgin, who in thy sweetest heart didst keep, as a precious treasure, the words of Jesus thy Son, and, pondering on the lofty mysteries they contained, didst learn to live for God

alone: how doth my cold heart confound me. O dearest Mother, get me grace so to meditate within my heart upon God's holy law, that I may strive to follow thee in the fervent practice of every Christian virtue.

Our Father, etc. Heart, etc.

4. Glorious Queen of martyrs, whose sacred heart was pierced in thy Son's bitter Passion by the sword whereof the holy old man Simeon had prophesied, gain for my heart true courage and a holy patience to bear the troubles and misfortunes of this miserable life, that so, by crucifying my flesh with its desires, while following the mortification of the cross, I may, indeed, show myself to be a true son of thine.

Our Father, etc. Heart, etc.

5. O Mary, mystical rose, whose loving heart, burning with the living fire of charity, did accept us for thy sons at the cross's foot, becoming thus our tender Mother, make me feel the sweetness of thy maternal heart and thy power with Jesus, that when menaced by the perils of this mortal life, and most of all in the dread hour of death, my heart, united with thine own, may love my Jesus then and through all ages. Amen.

Our Father, etc. Heart, etc.

Let us now turn to the most sacred Heart of Jesus, that he may inflame us with his holy love.

O divine Heart of Jesus, to Thee I consecrate myself, full of deep gratitude for the many blessings I have received, and daily do receive, from Thy boundless charity. With my whole heart I thank Thee for having, in addition to them all, vouchsafed to give me Thy own most holy Mother, giving me to her as a son in the person of the beloved disciple. Let my heart ever burn with love for Thee, finding in Thy sweetest Heart its peace, its refuge, and its happiness.

THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION.

(March 25th.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

The most plausible opinion relative to the origin of the celebration of this feast is the one which sets the beginning of its celebration towards the end of the fourth century in the Greek Church and a little later in the Western. Proclus, the successor of St. Chrysostom, preached sermons on this feast. It was known under various names—the "Day of the Angels' Greeting" and so on. In earlier times it was also celebrated on various dates—in Spain, for instance, on the 18th of December, and in Milan on the Sunday before Christmas.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION.

(Novena begins March 16th and ends March 24th.)

NINE SALUTATIONS.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231.*

1. With wonder I revere thee, holiest Virgin Mary, for of all God's creatures thou wast humblest on the very day of thy annunciation, when God himself exalted thee to the sublime dignity of his own Mother. O mightiest Virgin, make me, wretched sinner that I am, know the depths of my own nothingness, and make me humble myself at last, with all my heart, beneath the feet of all men.

Hail Mary, etc.

2. O Mary, holiest Virgin, who, when the archangel Gabriel hailed thee in thy annunciation, and thou wast raised by God above all choirs of the angels, didst confess thyself the handmaid of the Lord—"*Ecce ancilla Domini*—Behold the handmaid of the Lord"—do thou obtain for me true humility and a truly angelic purity, and so to live on earth as ever to be worthy of the blessings of God.

Hail Mary, etc.

3. With thee I rejoice, O Virgin ever blest! be-

cause by a simple *fiat*, uttered by thee so humbly, thou didst draw down from the bosom of the Eternal Father the divine Word into thine own pure bosom. O draw, then, ever my heart to God; and with God bring grace into my heart, that I may ever sincerely bless thy *fiat*, and with devotion cry: O almighty *fiat!* O *fiat* efficacious! O *fiat* to be venerated above all *fiats!*

Hail Mary, etc.

4. Mary, mighty Virgin, thou who on the day of thy annunciation wast found by the archangel Gabriel so prompt and ready to do God's will, and to correspond with the desires of the august Trinity, who wished for thy consent in order to redeem the world, obtain for me that whatever happens, good or ill, I may turn to my God and with resignation say: "*Fiat, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum*—Be it done to me according to Thy word."

Hail Mary, etc.

5. I see that thy obedience, Mary most holy, united thee so closely to God, that all creation never shall know again union so fair and perfect: "*Magis Deo conjungi, nisi fieret Deus non potuit*—She could not have been more united to God except by being God herself." I am overwhelmed with confusion in seeing how my sins have separated me from God. Help me, then, gentle

Mother, to repent sincerely of my sins, that I may be reunited to thy loving Jesus.

Hail Mary, etc.

6. Holiest Mary, if, through thy modesty, thou wert troubled at the appearance of the archangel Gabriel in thy dwelling, I am terrified at the sight of my monstrous pride. By thy incomparable humility, which brought forth God for men, reopened paradise, and let the captive souls go free from hell beneath (*quæ Deum hominibus peperit paradisum aperuit et animas ab inferno liberavit*), draw me, I pray thee, out of the deep pit wherein my sins have cast me, and make me save my soul.

Hail Mary, etc.

7. Though my tongue is unhallowed, yet, purest Virgin, I presume to hail thee every hour of the day: "*Ave, ave, Maria, gratia plena*—Hail, hail, Mary, full of grace." From my heart I pray thee pour into my soul a little of that mighty grace wherewith the Holy Spirit overshadowed thee, filled thee to the full.

Hail Mary, etc.

8. I believe, holiest Mary, that the almighty God, who was ever with thee from thy conception ("*Dominus tecum*—The Lord is with thee"), is, by His incarnation in thy purest womb, still more closely united to thee: make it thy care, I pray thee, that I may be with that same dear

Lord Jesus, ever one, heart and soul, by means of sanctifying grace.

Hail Mary, etc.

9. O holiest Mary! bless me, my heart and soul, as thou thyself was ever blessed of God among all women (*benedicta tu in mulieribus*); for I have this sure hope, that if, dear Mother, thou bless me while I live, then when I die I shall be blessed of God in the everlasting glory of heaven.

Then say the Litany, and afterward:

V. The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.

Let us Pray.

O God, who, by the message of an angel, didst will that Thy divine Word should take flesh from the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary! grant unto us, Thy suppliants, that we, who believe her to be truly the Mother of God, may be helped by her intercession with Thee. Amen.

For making the above novena an indulgence of three hundred days every day, and a plenary indulgence on the feast itself or on any day in its octave. —Pius VII., Aug. 4, Nov. 24, 1808; Jan. 11, 1809.

MEDITATION.

I.

When God was pleased to send his Son on earth, that by becoming man he might redeem lost man,

he chose for him a Virgin Mother, who, amongst all virgins, was the most pure, the most holy, and the most humble. Behold, whilst Mary was in her poor dwelling, beseeching God to send the promised Redeemer, an angel stood before her and saluted her, saying, *Hail, full of grace; the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.* (Luke i. 28.) And what was the conduct of this humble Virgin when she heard so honorable a salutation? She was not elated, but was silent and troubled, considering herself indeed unworthy of such praises: *she was troubled at his saying.*

O Mary, thou art so humble, and I am so filled with pride; obtain for me holy humility.

II.

Think you that these praises caused Mary at least to suspect that she might be the destined Mother of the Redeemer? No; they only caused her to conceive a great fear of herself; so much so, indeed, that the angel had to encourage her: *Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God.* He then announced to her that she was the chosen Mother of the Redeemer of the world: *Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus.*

Blessed art thou, O Mary; how dear wast thou

to God, and how dear art thou still to him! Have pity on me.

III.

"And now, O holy Virgin," says St. Bernard, "why dost thou delay thy consent? The Eternal Word awaits it to clothe himself with flesh and become thy Son. We also await it, who in misery are condemned to eternal death. If thou consentest, and acceptest to become his Mother, we shall be made free. Quickly, O Lady, answer. Delay not the salvation of the world, which depends on thy consent." But let us rejoice, for Mary already answers the angel: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done to me according to thy word.* "Behold," she says, "the slave of the Lord, who is bound to do all that her Lord commands." If he chooses a slave for his Mother, it is not she who is to be praised, but the goodness of that Lord alone, who is thus graciously pleased to honor her.

Example.

St. Francis Xavier, who like the apostles was called to preach the faith in far countries, was sustained in all his labors by the protection of the Blessed Virgin, whose devout client and servant he was. He had such vivid faith in her intercession that he had recourse to her for every grace. In the Church of Our Lady at Montmartre in Paris (1534)

he consecrated himself to the apostolic life on the Feast of her Assumption, and in her church at Loretto he received the interior call to go to India. To publicly acknowledge himself a servant of Mary, he wore her rosary on his breast.

When the saint explained the doctrines of our holy religion to the Oriental people among whom he labored, he was wont to close with the Salve Regina, entreating the Mother of grace to preserve the faith to these people. Often he spent the whole night in a church in prayer, usually before a picture of the Blessed Virgin. To her he went for help in his own affairs and in those of his spiritual children, imploring her intercession with a child-like trust. He had a particular veneration for the mystery of the Immaculate Conception and made a vow to defend it with all his power. Dying, he fervently called upon Mary and gave up his saintly spirit into her hands and those of her divine Son.

Prayer.

O most humble Mary, thou by this thy humility didst so enamor thy God that thou didst draw him to thee, so as to become thy Son and our Redeemer. I know that thy Son refuses thee nothing that thou askest him. Ask him to forgive all the offences that I have committed against him; ask him to grant me perseverance until death. In fine, recommend my soul to him; for thy recommendations meet with no denial from a Son who loves thee so much. O Mary, thou hast to save me; thou art my hope.

THE FEAST OF THE SEVEN DOLORS.

(Friday before Palm Sunday.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

The first trace of this feast is found in Germany in the beginning of the fifteenth century. In the year 1413 a synod assembled at Cologne under Archbishop Theodoricus and ordered the keeping of this day to combat the heresies of the Hussites, who were particularly active in destroying images and pictures of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Sixtus IV. gave a special Mass for the day, and Benedict XIII. extended the feast to the whole Church, fixing it for the Friday before Palm Sunday. The devotion to the Sorrowful Mother has been promoted especially by the Cistercians and the Servites, the former keeping the feast on the 17th of April and the latter on the third Sunday in September. It is certainly meet that the sufferings of the Sorrowful Mother be commemorated on a special day.

MEDITATIONS ON THE SEVEN DOLORS.

I.

St. Simeon's Prophecy.

In this valley of tears every man is born to weep, and all must suffer, by enduring the evils

which are of daily occurrence. But how much greater would the misery of life be did we also know the future evils which await us!

Our Lord conceals the trials which await us, that, whatever they may be, we may endure them but once. He did not show Mary this compassion, for she, whom God willed to be the Queen of sorrows, and in all things like his Son, had to see always before her eyes and continually to suffer all the torments that awaited her; and these were the sufferings of the Passion and death of her beloved Jesus; for in the Temple, St. Simeon, having received the divine Child in his arms, foretold to her that that Son would be a mark for all the persecutions and oppositions of men. *Behold, this Child is set . . . for a sign which shall be contradicted.* And therefore that a sword of sorrow should pierce her soul: *And thy own soul a sword shall pierce.* (Luke ii. 34, 35.)

The Blessed Virgin herself told St. Matilda that, on this announcement of St. Simeon, "all her joy was changed into sorrow." For, as it was revealed to St. Teresa, though the Blessed Mother already knew that the life of her Son would be sacrificed for the salvation of the world, yet she then learnt more distinctly and in greater detail the sufferings and cruel death that awaited her poor Son. She knew that he would be contra-

dicted, and this in everything: contradicted in his doctrines; for, instead of being believed, he would be esteemed a blasphemer for teaching that he was the Son of God; that he would be considered so notoriously wicked that, as the Jews said to Pilate, no trial was necessary to condemn him. *If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up to thee* (John xviii. 30); that he would be contradicted in his very soul; for even his Eternal Father, to give place to divine justice, contradicted him by refusing to hear his prayer when he said, *Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from me* (Matt. xxvi. 39); and abandoned him to fear, weariness, and sadness; so that our afflicted Lord exclaimed *My soul is sorrowful unto death!* (ib. 38), and his interior sufferings even caused him to sweat blood. She knew that, tortured in all his sacred members, in his hands, his feet, his face, his head, and in his whole body, drained of his blood and an object of scorn, he would die of torments on an ignominious cross.

The Evangelist says that as Jesus Christ advanced in years, so also did *he advance in wisdom and in grace with God and men.* (Luke ii. 52.) This is to be understood, as St. Thomas explains it, that he advanced in wisdom and grace in the estimation of men and before God, inasmuch as all his works would continually have availed to in-

crease his merit, had not grace been conferred upon him from the beginning, in its complete fulness, by virtue of the hypostatic union. But since Jesus advanced in the love and esteem of others, how much more must he have advanced in that of Mary! But, O God, as love increased in her, so much the more did her grief increase at the thought of having to lose him by so cruel a death; and the nearer the time of the Passion of her Son approached, so much the deeper did that sword of sorrow, foretold by Simeon, pierce the heart of his Mother. This was precisely revealed by the angel to St. Bridget, saying: "That sword of sorrow was every hour approaching nearer to the Blessed Virgin as the time for the Passion of her Son drew near."

Since, then, Jesus, our King, and his most holy Mother, did not refuse, for love of us, to suffer so cruel pains throughout their lives, it is reasonable that we, at least, should not complain if we have to suffer something.

Example.

St. Francis Hieronymo, that great saint of the eighteenth century, was as remarkable for his devotion to the Blessed Virgin as for his missionary labors. He fasted every Saturday, and on the feasts of the Blessed Virgin he added other works of penance to the fast. Our blessed Mother was his comfort in his trials, his strength in his labors, and

his refuge in perils. He recited the Rosary every day, even while he was on his most laborious missions. He endeavored at all times to imitate the virtues of Mary, particularly her great and active charity.

In Naples and other cities of Italy he labored incessantly for the conversion of sinners, in the pulpit, in the confessional, at sick-beds, in prisons, wherever his ardor for souls led him. And because he knew of his own experience what a great means of grace is the veneration of the Blessed Virgin, it was his aim to spread the devotion to her in every way that he could. In his sermons and instructions he constantly dwelt upon her virtues, her charity towards men, and the benefits to be obtained through her intercession.

He especially recommended recourse to Mary in temptations against purity and said, "Whoever is not a faithful servant of Mary, will hardly be saved." Among the members of his congregations and the confraternities which he directed he introduced the pious custom of publicly renewing the personal dedication to the service of Mary once every month. Everywhere he went it was noticeable how the devotion to the Mother of Our Lord received fresh vigor.

In this way the saint won his own salvation and showed the way to holiness to thousands of others. So much may a soul accomplish that loves Mary deeply and faithfully.

St. Francis Hieronymo died on the 11th of May, 1716, at the age of seventy-four, after having labored for forty years as a missionary.

Prayer.

Ah, my blessed Mother, it is not one sword only with which I have pierced thy heart, but I have done

so with as many as are the sins which I have committed. Ah, Lady, it is not to thee, who art innocent, that sufferings are due, but to me, who am guilty of so many crimes. But since thou hast been pleased to suffer so much for me, ah, by thy merits, obtain me great sorrow for my sins, and patience under the trials of this life, which will always be light in comparison with my demerits; for I have often deserved hell. Amen.

II.

The Flight of Jesus into Egypt.

Let us now consider the second sword of sorrow which wounded Mary, in the flight of her Infant Jesus into Egypt from the persecution of Herod.

Herod, having heard that the expected Messias was born, foolishly feared that he would deprive him of his kingdom. Hence St. Fulgentius, reproving him for his folly, thus addresses him: "Why art thou troubled, O Herod? This King who is born comes not to conquer kings by the sword, but to subjugate them wonderfully by his death." The impious Herod, therefore, waited to hear from the holy Magi where the King was born, that he might take his life; but finding himself deceived, he ordered all the male infants that could be found in the neighborhood of Bethlehem to be put to death. Then it was that the angel appeared

in a dream to St. Joseph, and desired him to *Arise, and take the Child and his Mother, and fly into Egypt.* (Matt. ii. 13.)

Seeing that he was no sooner born than he was persecuted unto death, what anguish, writes St. John Chrysostom, must the intimation of that cruel exile of herself and her Son have caused in her heart: "Flee from thy friends to strangers, from God's temple to the temples of devils. What greater tribulation than that a new-born child, hanging from its mother's breast, and she too in poverty, should with him be forced to fly?"

Any one may imagine what Mary must have suffered on this journey. Mary was then fifteen years of age—a delicate young woman, unaccustomed to such journeys. O God, what a touching sight must it have been to have beheld that tender Virgin, with her new-born babe in her arms, wandering through the world! "But how," asks St. Bonaventure, "did they obtain their food? Where did they repose at night? How were they lodged?" What can they have eaten but a piece of hard bread, either bought by St. Joseph or begged as an alms? Where can they have slept on such a road, unless on the sand or under a tree in a wood, exposed to the air and the dangers of robbers and wild beasts? Ah, had any one met these three greatest personages in the world, for whom

could he have taken them but for poor wandering beggars?

They resided in Egypt, according to Brocard and Jansenius, in a district called Maturea; though St. Anselm says that they lived in the city of Heliopolis, or at Memphis, now called old Cairo. They were foreigners, unknown, without revenues, money, or relatives, barely able to support themselves by their humble efforts. "As they were destitute," says St. Basil, "it is evident that they must have labored much to provide themselves with the necessaries of life."

After the death of Herod, St. Matthew relates, the angel again appeared to St. Joseph in a dream, and directed them to return to Judea. St. Bonaventure, speaking of this return, considers how much greater the Blessed Virgin's sufferings must have been on account of the pains of Jesus being so much increased, as he was then about seven years of age—an age, remarks the saint, at which "he was too big to be carried, and not strong enough to walk without assistance."

The sight, then, of Jesus and Mary wandering as fugitives through the world, teaches us that we also must live as pilgrims here below; detached from the goods which the world offers us, and which we must soon leave to enter eternity: *We have not here a lasting city, but seek one that is to*

come. (Heb. xiii. 14.) To which St. Augustine adds: "Thou art a guest: thou givest a look, and passest on." It also teaches us to embrace crosses, for without them we cannot live in this world. Whoever wishes to feel less the sufferings of this life must go in company with Jesus and Mary: "Take the Child and his Mother." All sufferings become light, and even sweet and desirable, to him who by his love bears this Son and this Mother in his heart. Let us, then, love them; let us console Mary by welcoming in our hearts her Son, whom men even now continue to persecute by their sins.

Example.

It is related in the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori that he once met a woman who was a great sinner. Amid tears she told him the hopelessness of her spiritual condition. He encouraged her as follows: "Be of good heart, my daughter, I will show you a way by which you may return to the Saviour whom you have forsaken. We have a good Mother, the Blessed Virgin. In her we may place our hope, for the Church hails her as the refuge of sinners. How much will not a good mother do for her children? If one falls she leaves the others to help up the fallen one, then she soothes it and cleans it. Turn then to the Blessed Virgin like a fallen child to its mother and she will raise you up and free your soul from the stain of sin and soothe the pangs of your soul." The woman did as she was advised and found eternal salvation through the intercession of the Blessed Mother.

Prayer.

Then, O Mary, even after thy Son hath died by the hands of men, who persecuted him unto death, these ungrateful men have not yet ceased persecuting him by their sins, and continue to afflict thee, O sorrowful Mother! And, O God, I also have been one of these. Ah, my most sweet Mother, obtain me tears to weep over such ingratitude. By the sufferings thou didst endure on that journey to Egypt, assist me on the journey which I am now making to eternity, that thus I may at length be united to thee in loving my persecuted Saviour in the kingdom of the blessed. Amen.

III.

The Loss of Jesus in the Temple.

The sorrow which we have this day to consider was one of the greatest that Mary had to endure in her life—the loss of her Son in the Temple.

He who is born blind feels but little the privation of the light of day; but he who has once enjoyed it, and loses it by becoming blind, indeed suffers much. Thus it is also with those unhappy souls who, blinded by the mire of the world, have but little knowledge of God—they suffer but little at not finding him; but, on the other hand, he who, illumined by celestial light, has become worthy to find by love the sweet presence of the supreme good, O God, how bitterly does he grieve when he finds himself deprived of it! Hence, let

us see how much Mary must have suffered from this third sword of sorrow which pierced her heart, when, having lost her Jesus in Jerusalem for three days, she was deprived of his most sweet presence, accustomed as she was constantly to enjoy it.

There are some who assert, and not without reason, that this dolor was not only one of the greatest, but the greatest and most painful of all. For, in the first place, Mary, in her other dolors, had Jesus with her: she suffered when St. Simeon prophesied to her in the Temple; she suffered in the flight into Egypt, but still in company with Jesus; but in this dolor she suffered far from Jesus, not knowing where he was: *And the light of my eyes itself is not with me.* (Ps. xxxvii. 11.) Origen says that through the love which this holy Mother bore her Son, "she suffered more in this loss of Jesus than any martyr ever suffered in the separation of his soul from his body."

In the second place, Mary, in all her other sorrows, well understood their cause—the redemption of the world, the divine will; but in this she knew not the cause of the absence of her Son. "The sorrowful Mother," says Lanspergius, "was grieved at the absence of Jesus, because, in her humility, she considered herself unworthy to remain longer with or to attend upon him on earth, and have the charge of so great a treasure."

"And who knows?" perhaps she thought within herself; "maybe I have not served him as I ought; perhaps I have been guilty of some negligence, for which he has left me."

Therefore in this sorrow alone did Mary complain, lovingly expostulating with Jesus, after she had found him: *Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.* (Luke ii. 48.)

This sorrow of Mary ought, in the first place, to serve as a consolation to those souls who are desolate, and no longer enjoy, as they once enjoyed, the sweet presence of their Lord. They may weep, but they should weep in peace, as Mary wept over the absence of her Son; and let them take courage and not fear that on this account they have lost the divine favor, for God himself assured St. Teresa that "no one is lost without knowing it, and that no one is deceived without wishing to be deceived." If Our Lord withdraws himself from the sight of a soul that loves him, he does not, therefore, depart from the heart; he often conceals himself from a soul that it may seek him with a more ardent desire and greater love. But whoever wishes to find Jesus must seek him, not amidst delights and the pleasures of the world, but amidst crosses and mortifications, as Mary sought him. *We sought Thee sorrowing,* as Mary

said to her Son. "Learn, then, from Mary," says Origen, "to seek Jesus."

Example.

In the seventeenth century there lived in Turin a holy nun of the Order of the Visitation, who was in a state of most extraordinary union with the Saviour. Her name was Joanna Benigna Goyos. She had a particular devotion to the sacred humanity of the Lord, and the essence of her spiritual life was in the constant offering up of all her actions and thoughts in union with the actions of Jesus. It was revealed to her that this was the favorite devotion of Mary and Joseph when on earth—"an amiable invention," as she called it, whereby they acquired infinite graces. When Joanna Benigna meditated on the mysteries of the thirty-three years of the life of Our Lord, she felt herself moved by a supernatural attraction to unite her soul with him in his sorrows. This was her interior occupation, until it pleased the Lord at last to make known to her some of the mysteries of his Sacred Heart. He revealed to her that the three days' separation from Mary and Joseph in Jerusalem caused him more pain than all the other sorrows of his life. For in the grief of his Mother at his loss he saw also her grief on Calvary when they would be parted by death. So great was the grief of Mary at this first separation that it would have caused her death but for the inner strength given her by his spiritual union with his Mother. No one but he himself could comprehend it.

Prayer.

O Blessed Virgin, why dost thou afflict thyself seeking for thy lost Son? Ah, Mary, dost thou sigh

after Jesus, thou who lovest none but Jesus? Leave sighs to me, and to so many sinners who love him not, and who have lost him by offending him. My most amiable Mother, if through my fault thy Son is not yet returned to my soul, do thou obtain for me that I may find him. I well know that he is found by those who seek him: *The Lord is good to the soul that seeketh him.* (Lam. iii. 25.) But do thou make me seek him as I ought. Thou art the gate through which all find Jesus; through thee I also hope to find him. Amen.

IV.

The Meeting of Mary with Jesus when he was going to Death.

The greater the love of the Blessed Mother for her Son, the greater her grief at the sight of his sufferings; and especially when she met her Son, already condemned to death, and bearing his cross to the place of punishment. This is the fourth sword of sorrow that we have this day to consider. In the morning the disciples of Jesus Christ came to this afflicted Mother, the one to bring her one account, the other another; but all were tidings of sorrow, verifying in her the prophecy of Jeremias: *Weeping, she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks; there is none to comfort her of all them that were dear to her.* (Lam. i. 2.) Some then came to relate to her the cruel treatment of her Son in the house of Cai-

phas, and others the insults he had received from Herod. Finally St. John came. "Ah! afflicted Mother," said St. John, "thy Son is already condemned to death; he is already gone forth, bearing himself his cross, on his way to Calvary," as the saint afterwards related in his Gospels: *and bearing his own cross he went forth to that place which is called Calvary.* (John xix. 17.) "Come, if thou desirest to see him, and bid him a last farewell, in some street through which he must pass."

St. Bonaventure represents the afflicted Mother taking a shorter way, and placing herself at the corner of a street, to meet her afflicted Son as he was passing by. While Mary was waiting in that place, how much must she have heard said by the Jews, who soon recognized her, against her beloved Son, and perhaps even words of mockery against herself.

Alas, what a scene of sorrows then presented itself before her!—the nails, the hammers, the cords, the fatal instruments of the death of her Son, all of which were borne before him. And what a sword must the sound of that trumpet have been to her heart which proclaimed the sentence pronounced against her Jesus!

But behold, the instruments, the trumpeter, and the executioners have already passed; she raised

her eyes and saw, O God! a young man covered with blood and wounds from head to foot, a wreath of thorns on his head and two heavy beams on his shoulders. She looked at him, and hardly recognized him, saying, with Isaias, *and we have seen him, and there was no sightliness.* (Is. liii. 2.) Yes, for the wounds, the bruises, and the clotted blood disfigured him beyond recognition.

When Margaret, the daughter of Sir Thomas More, met her father on his way to death, she could only exclaim, "O father! father!" and fell fainting at his feet. Mary, at the sight of her Son on his way to Calvary did not faint; no, for it was not becoming, as Father Suarez remarks, that this Mother should lose the use of her reason; nor did she die, for God reserved her for greater grief.

The Mother would have embraced him, as St. Anselm says, but the guards thrust her aside with insults, and urged forward the suffering Lord; and Mary followed him. Ah, holy Virgin, whither goest thou? To Calvary. And canst thou trust thyself to behold him who is thy life hanging on a cross? *And thy life shall be, as it were, hanging before thee.* (Deut. xxviii. 66.) Let us, then, pity her, and let us also accompany her Son and herself by bearing with patience the cross that Our Lord imposes on us. St. John Chrysostom asks

why Jesus Christ, in his other sufferings, was pleased to endure them alone, but in carrying his cross was assisted by the Cyrenean? He replies that it was "that thou mayest understand that the cross of Christ is not sufficient without thine."

Example.

The cross unites souls to God. Blessed Jerome Emilian, when a soldier, and loaded with sins, was shut up by his enemies in a tower. There, moved by his misfortunes, and enlightened by God to change his life, he had recourse to the ever-blessed Virgin; and from that time, by the help of this divine Mother, he began to lead the life of a saint, so much so that he merited once to see the very high place that God had prepared for him in heaven. He became the founder of the religious Order of the Somaschi, died as a saint, and has lately been canonized by the holy Church.

Prayer.

My sorrowful Mother, by the merit of that grief which thou didst feel in seeing thy beloved Jesus led to death, obtain me the grace that I also may bear with patience the crosses which God sends me. Happy indeed shall I be if I only know how to accompany thee with my cross until death. Thou with thy Jesus—and you were both innocent—hast carried a far heavier cross; and shall I, a sinner, who have deserved hell, refuse to carry mine? Ah, immaculate Virgin, from thee do I hope for help to bear all crosses with patience. Amen.

V.

The Death of Jesus.

We have now to witness a new kind of martyrdom—a Mother condemned to see an innocent Son, and one whom she loves with the whole affection of her soul, cruelly tormented and put to death before her own eyes.

There stood by the cross of Jesus his Mother. (John xix. 25.) St. John believed that in these words he had said enough of Mary's martyrdom. Consider her at the foot of the cross in the presence of her dying Son, and then see if there be a sorrow like unto her sorrow.

As soon as our agonized Redeemer had reached the Mount of Calvary, the executioners stripped him of his clothes, and piercing his hands and feet, they fastened him on the cross. Having crucified him, they planted the cross, and thus left him to die. The executioners left him; but not so Mary. She then drew nearer to the cross to be present at his death. "But what did it avail thee, O Lady," says St. Bonaventure, "to go to Calvary and see this Son expire? Shame should have prevented thee: for his disgrace was thine, since thou wert his Mother. Ah, thy heart did not then think of its own sorrows, but of the sufferings and death

of thy dear Son," and therefore thou wouldst thyself be present, at least to compassionate him. When a mother is obliged to witness the sufferings of a dying child, she procures all possible relief for her child, but O Mary, thou hast to witness the agony of thy dying Jesus; but thou canst administer him no relief. Mary heard her Son exclaim, *I thirst*, but she could not even give him a drop of water to refresh him in that great thirst. She saw that on that bed of torture her Son, suspended by three nails, could find no repose; she would have clasped him in her arms to give him relief, or that at least he might there have expired, but she could not. She beheld that poor Son, who in his sea of grief sought consolation, as it was foretold by the prophet, but in vain: *I have trodden the winepress alone; I looked about and there was none to help; I sought, and there was none to give aid.* (Is. lxiii. 3.) But who amongst men would console him, since all were enemies? Even on the cross he was taunted and blasphemed on all sides: *And they that passed by, blasphemed him, wagging their heads.* (Matt. xxvii. 39.)

But that which the most increased the sorrows which Mary endured through compassion for her Son was hearing him complain on the cross that even his Eternal Father had abandoned him: *My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* (Matt.

xxvii. 39.) So that the afflicted Mother saw her Jesus suffering on every side; she desired to comfort him, but could not. But if Mary's lips were silent, her heart was not so, for she incessantly offered the life of her Son to the divine justice for our salvation. Therefore we know that by the merits of her dolors she coöperated in our birth to the life of grace; and hence we are the children of her sorrows. And indeed these were the last words with which Jesus bid her farewell before his death: this was his last recommendation, leaving us to her for her children in the person of St. John: *Woman, behold thy son.* (John xix. 26.) From that time Mary began to perform this good office of a mother for us.

Example.

Once as St. Matilda meditated on the words the dying Saviour addressed to his Mother, "Woman, behold thy son," she was moved to ask the Saviour that he might vouchsafe to her the same favor which he did to St. John and say to his blessed Mother of her, "Woman, behold thy daughter." Her desire was rewarded. She heard how the Saviour recommended her to the Blessed Virgin, in view of the blood he had shed for her, the death which he had suffered for her, and because she was his spouse by her vow of chastity. St. Matilda, overjoyed by this grace, asked that the Lord might grant the same favor to all who ask it of him. And the Lord revealed to her that he would deny it to none who fervently ask and desire it. Let us therefore pray

humbly and fervently to Jesus to grant us the grace to be worthy children of such a Mother.

Prayer.

Ah, Mother, the most sorrowful of all mothers, thy Son is, then, dead; that Son so amiable, and who loved thee so much! Weep, then, for thou hast reason to weep. Disdain not, in the mean time, O my Mother, to keep me near thee, to weep with thee, since I have so much reason to weep for the crimes by which I have offended him. Ah, Mother of mercy, I hope, first, through the death of my Redeemer, and then through thy sorrows, to obtain pardon and eternal salvation. Amen.

VI.

The Piercing of the Side of Jesus, and His Descent from the Cross.

Now we are to consider the sixth dolor which afflicted this poor Mother. Attend and weep. Hitherto the dolors of Mary tortured her one by one; on this day they are all, as it were, united to assail her. That the joy of the following Paschal Sabbath might not be disturbed, the Jews desired that the body of Jesus should be taken down from the cross; but as this could not be done unless the criminals were dead, men came with iron bars to break Our Lord's legs, as they had already done those of the two thieves who were crucified with him. Mary was still weeping

over the death of her Son, when she saw these armed men advancing towards her Jesus. She implored them, writes St. Bonaventure, "not to break his legs." But while she thus spoke, O God! she saw a soldier brandish a lance and pierce the side of Jesus. There came out blood and water; for only those few drops of blood remained, and even those Our Saviour was pleased to shed that we might understand that he had no more blood to give us.

The afflicted Mother, fearing that other injuries might still be inflicted on her Son, entreated Joseph of Arimathea to obtain the body of her Jesus from Pilate, that at least in death she might guard and protect it from further outrage. Jesus then was taken down from the cross. "Oh, how many swords," says St. Bonaventure, "pierced the poor Mother's soul" when she received the body of her Son from the cross! Let us only consider the anguish it would cause any mother to receive into her arms the body of her lifeless son. Bernardine de Bustis describes the afflicted Mother as standing and extending her arms to meet her dear Son; she embraced him and then sat at the foot of the cross. His mouth was open, his eyes were dim; she then examined his mangled flesh and uncovered bones; she took off the crown and saw the sad injuries which the

thorns had inflicted on that sacred head; she saw the holes in his hands and feet.

But what would she now say were she still susceptible of suffering? What would be her grief to see that men, notwithstanding that her Son has died for them, still continue to torment and crucify him by their sins! Let us, at least, cease to torment this afflicted Mother; and if we have hitherto grieved her by our sins, let us now do all that she desires. She says, *Return, ye transgressors, to the heart.* (Is. xlvi. 8.) Sinners, return to the wounded heart of my Jesus; return as penitents, and he will welcome you. "O world," continues Mary, *behold, then, thy time is the time of lovers.* (Ezech. xvi. 8.) "Now that my Son has died to save thee, it is no longer for thee a time of fear, but one of love—a time to love him, who to show thee the love he bore thee was pleased to suffer so much." And if you desire, O children of Mary, to find a place in the heart of Jesus, without fear of being rejected, "go," says Ubertino da Casale, "go with Mary; for she will obtain the grace for you."

Example.

The following happening is related in the life of St. Alphonsus Liguori, and its truth is attested by the saint himself with a solemn oath:

In the year 1731 the Italian province of Apulia was devastated by a terrible earthquake. In the

capital, Foggia, nearly everything was wrecked. Among other things the Collegiate Church was in ruins. This church had had in its possession a most ancient miraculous picture of the Blessed Virgin. It was so old that the lines and colors were almost faded from view. Nevertheless it was rescued from the débris and carried to the church of the Capuchins, where the faithful took refuge, seeking the protection of Mary. One day the faded picture suddenly glowed with the color and freshness of youth and the countenance looked benignly down upon the assembled people. This miracle was repeated on several different days.

At the same time St. Alphonsus was sent for by the Bishop of Foggia to preach a novena to the Blessed Virgin. One evening St. Alphonsus, filled with the pious desire to behold more closely a picture of which so much that was wonderful was related, mounted the steps of the altar above which it was hung. Suddenly he fell into an ecstasy and remained in that state for an hour. When he came back to ordinary consciousness, he began to sing the hymn "Ave maris Stella," and the few people remaining in the church joined with him.

On the following day the saint related what he had seen, and in memory of his vision he had a picture painted representing the Blessed Virgin as she appeared to him. This picture is still to be seen. And that no one might have a doubt of the vision of the saint, it pleased God to attest it by another miracle. When, after several days, Alphonsus was preaching eloquently of devotion to Mary and asking his hearers to put their trust in her help, the face of the painting, which was ordinarily veiled, was suddenly uncovered and showed itself with the features and bloom of a maiden of fourteen. A bright ray of light fell from it upon the head of the pious

preacher. At once the cry, "A miracle! a miracle!" arose. The people wept with emotion and the hearts of many were moved to penance and great sinners gave public and unusual evidences of conversion.

Prayer.

O afflicted Virgin! O soul great in virtue but great also in sorrow, for the one and the other took their rise in that immense love with which thy heart was inflamed towards God, for thou couldst love him alone; ah, Mother, pity me, for instead of loving God I have greatly offended him. Thy sorrows encourage me to hope for pardon. But this is not enough; I wish to love my Lord; and who can better obtain me this love than thou, who art the Mother of fair love? Ah, Mary, thou comfortest all; console me also. Amen.

VII.

The Burial of Jesus.

Behold the last sword of Mary's sorrow, which we have now to consider; for after witnessing the death of her Son on the cross, and embracing for a last time his lifeless body, this Blessed Mother had to leave him in the sepulchre, never more to enjoy his beloved presence on earth.

That we may better understand this last dolor, we will return to Calvary and consider the afflicted Mother, who still holds the lifeless body of her Son clasped in her arms. The holy disciples, fearful that the poor Mother might die of

grief, approached her to take the body of her Son from her arms to bear it away for burial. Having embalmed it, they wrapped it in a linen cloth which was already prepared. On this cloth, which is still preserved at Turin, Our Lord was pleased to leave to the world an impression of his sacred body.

The disciples then bore him to the tomb. To do this, they first of all raised the sacred body on their shoulders, and then the mournful train set forth; choirs of angels from heaven accompanied it; the holy women followed, and with them the afflicted Mother also followed her Son to the place of burial. When they had reached the appointed place, O how willingly would Mary have there buried herself alive with her Son had such been his will! Finally, the disciples raised the stone and closed up the holy sepulchre, and in it the body of Jesus, that great treasure—a treasure so great that neither earth nor heaven had a greater. Then bidding her last farewell to her beloved Jesus and to the sepulchre, Mary left it and returned to her own house. "This Mother," says St. Bernard, "went away so afflicted and sad that she moved many to tears in spite of themselves; and wherever she passed, all who met her wept," and could not restrain their tears. And he adds that the holy disciples and women

who accompanied her "mourned even more for her than for their Lord."

When she arrived at her house, the afflicted Mother cast her eyes around and no longer saw her Jesus; but, instead of the sweet presence of her dear Son, the remembrance of his beautiful life and cruel death presented itself before her eyes. She remembered how she had pressed that Son to her bosom in the crib of Bethlehem; the conversations she had held with him during the many years they had dwelt in the house of Nazareth; she remembered their mutual affection, their loving looks, the words of eternal life which fell from those divine lips; and then the sad scene which she had that day witnessed again presented itself before her. The nails, the thorns, the lacerated flesh of her Son, those deep wounds, those uncovered bones, that open mouth, those dimmed eyes, all presented themselves before her. Ah, what a night of sorrow was that night for Mary! Thus does St. Bernard speak in her name: "O truly begotten of God, Thou wast to me a father, a son, a spouse: Thou wast my very soul! Now I am deprived of my father, widowed of my spouse, a desolate, childless Mother; having lost my only Son, I have lost all."

And thou, my soul, weepest not! Ah, turn to Mary, and address her with St. Bonaventure, say-

ing: "O my own sweet Lady, let me weep; thou art innocent, I am guilty." Entreat her at least to let thee weep with her: "Grant that with thee I may weep." She weeps for love; do thou weep through sorrow for thy sins.

Example.

A few days before the Feast of the Annunciation a certain priest at Strasbourg was asked to visit a gentleman who was mortally ill. The priest made a visit, but noticed at once during his conversation that the dying man was one who had long since lost his faith and filled his mind with the incongruities of what he considered a more modern philosophy. After the priest had exhausted all his resources and had made no impression upon the closed heart of the man, he said to him: "My dear friend, it fills me with fear and sorrow to see you approaching eternity without being reconciled to Our Lord. You have refused everything I have asked of you so far; do not refuse me this last request. Say a little prayer to the Blessed Virgin every day. If you have no confidence in prayer yourself, say it in my name, for I have such confidence in her intercession that I believe she will even consider an appeal to her made in this way. Promise me that you will do this and I feel assured that by the time of her next feast you will have made your peace with God." These simple words were effective. The man promised to say St. Bernard's great prayer, the Memorare, every day. On the day of the Annunciation the priest made the third visit. But the patient was a changed man by this time. He confessed his sins with all the evidences of contrition, received Communion and died an edifying death.

Prayer.

My afflicted Mother, I will not leave thee alone to weep; no, I will accompany thee with my tears. This grace I now ask of thee: obtain that I may always bear in mind and always have a tender devotion towards the Passion of Jesus and thy sorrows, that the remainder of my days may thus be spent in weeping over thy sufferings, my own sweet Mother, and those of my Redeemer. These sorrows, I trust, will give me the confidence and strength that I shall require at the hour of death, that I may not despair at the sight of the many sins by which I have offended my Lord. They must obtain me pardon, perseverance, and heaven, where I hope to rejoice with thee, and to sing the infinite mercies of my God for all eternity. Thus do I hope; thus may it be. Amen. Amen.

LITTLE ROSARY IN HONOR OF THE SEVEN DOLORS OF MARY.

EXPLANATION.

This chaplet is divided into seven parts, each being composed of one "Our Father" and seven "Hail Marys," in honor of the seven principal sorrows of Mary, the Mother of God. To gain the indulgences that are attached to it, and that have been largely increased by Clement XII., the rosary should have been duly blessed for this purpose, and whilst reciting it one must reflect on the sorrows of the Blessed Virgin, according to one's capacity, and add at the end the "Hail Mary" three times in honor of the tears that she shed during these sorrows.

Benedict XIII. granted two hundred days' indulgence for every "Our Father" and every "Hail

Mary," to those who recite the little Rosary of the Seven Dolors in the churches of the Servites of Mary. He also granted the same favor to all who recite it in any place whatever on Fridays or any day during Lent. To those who recite it on other days he granted one hundred days for every "Our Father" and "Hail Mary." To those who recite it entire, seven years and seven quarantines. To those who recite it for a month a plenary indulgence applicable to the souls in purgatory.

Incline unto mine aid, O God! O Lord! make haste to help me. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

My Mother! share thy grief with me,
And let me bear thee company
To mourn thy Jesus' death with thee.

I.

I pity thee, O afflicted Mother, on account of the first sword of sorrow that pierced thee, when in the Temple all the outrages which men would inflict on thy beloved Jesus were presented before thee by St. Simeon. By that bitter knowledge, then, which for so many years afflicted thy heart, I beseech thee, my Queen, to obtain me the grace that during my life and at my death I may ever keep the Passion of Jesus and thy sorrows impressed on my heart.

Our Father once, Hail Mary seven times, and the strophe are repeated after each dolor.

II.

I pity thee, my afflicted Mother, for the second sword which pierced thee, when, soon after his birth, thou didst behold thy innocent Son threatened with death by those very men for whose salvation he had come into the world; so that in the darkness of night thou wast obliged to fly secretly with him into Egypt. I beseech thee, my beloved Lady, to obtain for me grace to suffer with patience until death, in thy company, the trials of this miserable life that I may thus in the next escape the eternal punishments of hell, which I have deserved.

Our Father, etc.

III.

I pity thee, my sorrowful Mother, on account of the third sword which pierced thee in the loss of thy dear Son Jesus, who remained absent from thee in Jerusalem for three days. By the sighs, then, of those three days, for thee too long and bitter, I beseech thee to obtain me the grace that I may never lose my God; that so, always clinging to him, I may leave the world united to him.

Our Father, etc.

IV.

I pity thee, my sorrowful Mother, for the fourth sword which pierced thee, in seeing thy Son con-

demned to death, bound with cords and chains, covered with blood and wounds, crowned with a wreath of thorns, falling under the weight of a heavy cross which he carried on his wounded shoulders, going as an innocent Lamb to die for love of us. By this great sorrow, then, I beseech thee to obtain me the grace to live in all things resigned to the will of my God, and to carry my cross cheerfully in company with Jesus, until my last breath.

Our Father, etc.

V.

I pity thee, my afflicted Mother, for the fifth sword which pierced thee, when on Mount Calvary thou didst behold thy beloved Son Jesus slowly dying before thy eyes, amid so many torments and insults, on that hard bed of the cross, where thou couldst not administer him even the least of those comforts that are granted to the greatest criminals at the hour of death. I beseech thee, by the agony which thou, my most loving Mother, didst endure together with thy dying Son, and by the sadness which thou didst feel, when, for the last time, he spoke to thee from the cross and bade thee farewell, and left all of us, in the person of St. John, to thee as thy children; by that constancy with which thou didst then see him bow

down his head and expire, I beseech thee to obtain me the grace, from thy crucified love, to live and die crucified to all earthly things, that I may spend my life for God alone, and thus one day enter paradise to enjoy him face to face.

Our Father, etc.

VI.

I pity thee, my afflicted Mother, for the sixth sword which pierced thee, when thou didst see the sweet heart of thy Son pierced through and through. By this cruel sorrow, then, which was all thine, I beseech thee to obtain me the grace to dwell in the Heart of Jesus, wounded and opened for me; in that Heart, I say, which is the beautiful abode of love, in which all souls who love God repose; and that, living there, I may never think of or love anything but God. Most sacred Virgin, thou canst obtain this for me; from thee do I hope for it.

Our Father, etc.

VII.

I pity thee, my afflicted Mother, for the seventh sword which pierced thee on seeing thy Son dead in thy arms, no longer fair and beautiful, but covered with blood, livid and all lacerated with wounds, so that even his bones were seen. And when he was borne to the sepulchre, thou wouldst

thyself accompany him, and place him with thy own hands in the tomb; and bidding him the last farewell, thou didst leave thy loving heart buried with thy Son. By this martyrdom of thy beautiful soul, do thou obtain me, O Mother of fair love, the forgiveness of the offences which I have committed against my beloved God, and of which I repent with my whole heart, that I may one day, after this miserable exile, go to paradise to sing the praises of Jesus and of thee for all eternity. Amen.

Our Father, etc.

Pray for us, O most sorrowful Virgin, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray.

O God, at whose Passion, according to the prophecy of Simeon, a sword of sorrow did pierce through the most sweet soul of the glorious Virgin and Mother Mary, grant that we, who commemorate and reverence her dolors, may experience the blessed effect of Thy Passion, who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

STABAT MATER.

At the cross her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Close to Jesus to the last:
Through her heart his sorrow sharing,
All his bitter anguish bearing,
Lo! the piercing sword had passed.

Oh, how sad, and sore distressèd,
Now was she, that Mother Blessèd
Of the sole-begotten One;
Woe-begone, with heart's prostration,
Mother meek, the bitter Passion
Saw she of her glorious Son.

Who could mark, from tears refraining,
Christ's dear Mother uncomplaining,
In so great a sorrow bowed?
Who, unmoved, behold her languish
Underneath his cross of anguish,
'Mid the fierce unpitying crowd?

For his people's sins rejected,
She her Jesus, unprotected,
Saw with thorns, with scourges rent;
Saw her Son from judgment taken,
Her beloved in death forsaken,
Till his Spirit forth he sent.

Fount of love and holy sorrow,
Mother! may my spirit borrow
Somewhat of thy woe profound;
Unto Christ with pure emotion,
Raise my contrite heart's devotion,—
Love to read in every wound.

Those five wounds on Jesus smitten,
Mother! in my heart be written,
Deep as in thine own they be:
Thou, my Saviour's cross who bearest,
Thou, thy Son's rebuke who sharest,
Let me share them both with thee!

In the Passion of my Maker
Be my sinful soul partaker,
Weep till death, and weep with thee;
Mine with thee be that sad station,
There to watch the great salvation
Wrought upon the atoning Tree.

Virgin, thou of virgins fairest,
May the bitter woe thou bearest
Make on me impression deep;
Thus Christ's dying may I carry,
With him in his Passion tarry,
And his wounds in memory keep.

May his wounds transfix me wholly,
May his cross and life-blood holy
Ebriate my heart and mind:
Thus inflamed with pure affection,
In the Virgin's Son protection
May I at the judgment find.

When in death my limbs are failing
Let Thy Mother's prayer prevailing
Lift me, Jesus, to Thy throne:
To my parting soul be given
Entrance through the gate of heaven;
There confess me for Thine own!

An indulgence of one hundred days was granted by Pope Innocent XI. to the faithful who say this hymn with devotion in honor of the Mother of sorrows. This indulgence was confirmed by Pope Pius IX., by a rescript, June 18, 1876.

THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION.

(July 2d.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

The first trace of this feast as one of the regular feasts of the Church is found in the middle of the fourteenth century. It has been kept as a special feast by the Franciscans since 1263. Its most ardent promoter was St. Bonaventure, who proposed in that year that the feast be solemnly kept in the whole Franciscan Order, which proposition Pope Urban IV. sanctioned.

Urban VI. resolved in the last year of his Pontificate, 1389, to extend the feast to the entire Church, but died before he could publish the bull

announcing it. His successor, Boniface IX., did so in the next year, and in 1441 the Synod of Basle reaffirmed the order of the Popes and insisted on the celebration of the feast by the entire Church.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION.

(Novena begins June 23d and ends July 1st.)

PRAYER.

O holy Virgin, spotless mirror of humility, great was thy charity which moved thee to visit thy holy cousin St. Elizabeth, and exceeding thy joy when that venerable matron, inspired by the Holy Ghost, exclaimed on seeing thee: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" O dear Mother, I beseech thee, by this thy joy, to obtain for me the favors I petition in this novena [*name them*], and grant that our hearts may be visited by thy divine Son, so that, being free from all sin, we may praise him and give him thanks forever. Amen.

Nine Hail Marys or the Magnificat.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST.

I.

Mary set out from Nazareth to go to the city of Judea, in which St. Elizabeth resided, a distance, according to Broccardus, of upwards of seventy miles, or at least seven days' journey. Her spouse, St. Joseph, alone accompanied her. The holy and tender Virgin hastened her steps, as St. Luke tells us: *Mary, rising up in those days, went into the hill country with haste.* Tell us, O holy Lady, why didst thou undertake so long and arduous a journey, and why didst thou so hasten thy steps? "I went," she replies, "to exercise my office of charity: I went to console a family."

Since, then, O great Mother of God, thy office is to console and dispense graces to souls, ah, be graciously pleased also to visit and console my soul. Thy visit sanctified the house of Elizabeth: come, O Mary, and sanctify me also.

II.

Behold the Blessed Virgin already arrived at the house of Elizabeth. She was the Mother of God, but yet she was the first to salute Elizabeth: *And she entered . . . and saluted Elizabeth.* Elizabeth, enlightened by God, knew that the divine Word had become man, that he had become the

Son of Mary; therefore she called her blessed amongst women, and blessed the divine fruit which she carried in her womb: *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* At the same time, filled with confusion and joy, she exclaimed: *And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?* But what does the humble Mary reply to these words? She says: *My soul doth magnify the Lord;* as if she had said, "Ah, Elizabeth, thou dost praise me; but I praise my God, who hath been graciously pleased to exalt me, who am his poor servant, to the dignity of being his Mother:" *He hath regarded the humility of his handmaid.*

O most holy Mary, since thou dispensest so many graces to those who ask thee for them, I beseech thee to grant me thy humility. Thou esteemest thyself as nothing before God; but I am worse than nothing, for I am a sinner. Thou canst make me humble; do so for the love of that God who made thee his Mother.

III.

But what took place at the first sound of the voice of Mary saluting Elizabeth? *When Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.* The infant John exulted with joy on ac-

count of the divine grace which was then conferred upon him. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost; and Zachary, the father of the Baptist, had shortly afterwards the consolation of recovering his speech.

Example.

St. Jane Frances de Chantal, the foundress of the order of the Visitation, lost her mother in childhood. Painful as this loss was to her she yet consoled herself with the thought that Mary is our Mother, and thinking thus tried to deserve her care and protection. As the result of this beneficent protection she was removed from the danger of worldly and careless companionship, which might have been most disastrous to her virtue and salvation.

When St. Jane married she tried particularly to emulate the household virtues of the Blessed Virgin. In spite of her high social position she lived quietly and devoted herself to her household, her children, and her charities. Her time was divided between work and prayer. Later she followed the same rule of life when she became a widow.

When in conjunction with St. Francis de Sales she founded the order of the Visitation she communicated this spirit of work and prayer to her spiritual daughters. She held up to them the retired life of the Virgin Mother, with its silent and modest virtues, and encouraged them to follow this high model. Though she prized the Rosary and other devotions in honor of the Blessed Virgin very highly, she was yet wont to say that the practice of humility, of self-denial, and of charity towards our neighbor is often more pleasing to the Blessed Mother than long verbal prayers. This spirit she

left as a precious heritage to her order, and thus it still works on bringing blessings wherever it is established.

Prayer of St. Jane Frances de Chantal.

Remember, most compassionate Virgin, that no one has ever had recourse to thee without feeling the effects of thy goodness. In this confidence, Virgin of virgins, I present myself before thee with a humble desire that thou wilt deign to regard my miseries. Employ for me thy maternal authority near thy divine Son; supplicate him to grant me, not deliverance from my evils, unless it be his holy will, but the grace to live in his holy love, in his good and eternal pleasure, to which I sacrifice myself without reserve, in union with the sacrifice which thou didst make of thyself on the day of thy immaculate conception, for which I wish to bless forever the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND THE SCAPULAR.

(Feast July 16th.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

As men esteem it an honor to have persons who wear their livery, so also is our blessed Lady pleased that her clients should wear her scapular, as a mark that they have dedicated themselves to her service, and that they are members of the household of the Mother of God.

Fathers Crasset and Lezzana, speaking of the scapular of Mount Carmel, relate that on July 16, 1251, the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Simon Stock, general of the Carmelites at Cambridge, and giving him the scapular, said that all who should wear it would be saved from eternal damnation. She said, "Receive, my beloved son, this scapular of thy order, the badge of my confraternity, a privilege granted to thee and to all Carmelites: whoever dies clothed with it will not suffer eternal flames."

On Mount Carmel the prophet Elias, and after him others, served the Lord day and night in holy meditations and prayers. It was therefore after this mount that the order of the Carmelites received its name.

Moreover, Father Crasset relates that Mary appeared to Pope John XXII. and commanded him to make it known that all those who should wear this scapular would be delivered from purgatory on the Saturday after their death; and this he did by a bull, which was afterwards confirmed by Alexander V., Clement VII., and other Pontiffs. Paul V. gives us to understand the same thing, and seems to explain the bulls of his predecessors, and prescribes in his the conditions on which the indulgences may be gained. These conditions are that each one should observe the

chastity required in his state of life, and the recitation of the little office of the Blessed Virgin. Those who cannot do so must be exact in keeping the fast days prescribed by the Church, and abstain from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Those, however, who cannot fast should say seven "Our Fathers" and seven "Hail Marys" several times a week, or do some other pious work under the direction of a priest who has the special power to change these conditions of penance with regard to the scapular of Mount Carmel.

In order to gain the plenary indulgences, besides confession and Communion, the members ought to visit a church or chapel of Carmelite friars or sisters and there pray according to the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff. Those who are unable to comply with this condition should have it commuted into some other pious work by a priest who has the faculty for that purpose.

All who wear this scapular enjoy a twofold privilege through the merits of the Blessed Virgin, who is their protectress and advocate. One is of a spiritual nature, and the other is temporal. The first is founded on the words of the Blessed Virgin to St. Simon Stock: "Any person who wears this, if he dies a pious death, will not suffer in eternal fire. This is the sign of his salvation."

The Blessed Virgin will never allow, for so great is the power of her intercession, her true disciples to undergo eternal condemnation; she will protect them efficaciously, especially at the hour of death, obtaining for them divine grace that they may escape the machinations of the wicked one. The scapular has been found to be a protection in the trials of this life. In sickness and in the hour of death many have found that they have derived help in invoking the assistance of the most glorious Virgin of Mount Carmel.

When any person receives the scapular for the first time, it should be blessed by a priest who has the proper faculty for doing so. It must be worn both day and night, but may be taken off for any necessary purpose. It will not be sufficient to carry it about in the pocket or leave it in any special place, as may be done with beads or crucifixes. The word "scapular" implies a habit which is worn over the shoulder, and as the scapular is called "the little habit," it must be worn in the same manner.

A plenary indulgence is granted to the members of this association:

1. On the day of their reception.

2. On the feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel, the 16th of July, or on the following Sunday.

3. On the Feasts of the Purification, Annunciation, Visitation, Assumption, Nativity, Presentation, and Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

4. On the feasts of St. Joseph, St. Teresa, St. Ann, St. Andrew Corsini, St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi, St. Angelus, 5th of May, St. Albert, 7th of August.

5. At the hour of death, provided the sick person, having the scapular on, with sincere contrition, if confession be impossible, devoutly pronounce the most holy name of Jesus.

Besides the scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, also called the brown scapular, there are four other scapulars.

The black scapular is worn out of devotion to the holy cross of Our Lord. This scapular is recommended by the Passionists.

The blue scapular is worn out of devotion to the Immaculate Conception. Pope Pius IX. favored it with many indulgences after the definition of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The white is worn out of devotion to the Blessed Virgin of Reward and out of devotion to the Blessed Trinity.

The red in honor of the Passion of Our Lord, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and the compassionate heart of Mary.

Until recently these five scapulars were usually sewn together and worn as one. But by a decree of his Holiness Leo XIII., dated April 27, 1893, the scapular of Mount Carmel can no longer be blessed with the others, but must be worn and blessed separately.

Example.

St. Teresa well knew that she had received all her graces, and above all, the gift of love, which made her beautiful soul so rich, through the hands of this most sweet Mother. And so, in order to testify her thankfulness to her most holy Mother, she did not know what more to do to love and honor her. From her early childhood, while still an inmate of her parental home, she would go in quest of secluded spots where she might honor Mary by saying the Rosary and other pious prayers. On the death of her mother she hastened to present herself before her Queen, and, with confidence and love, proceeded to offer herself up to be a daughter to her, protesting that from that moment she should be her only and her dearest Mother. In truth, in all her tribulations and in all her needs, the saint ever had recourse to Mary, as to her most loving Mother. It was with the special object of seeing her honored everywhere that she undertook the work of reforming the Carmelite order, whose glory it is to fight under the banner and the especial protection of the Queen of heaven.

Prayer to Obtain a Good Death.

O Mary, sweet refuge of poor sinners and my tender Mother! when my soul must depart from this world, by the grief that thou didst experience in

being present at the death of thy divine Son on the cross, I beseech thee to assist me with thy mercy. Banish from me the infernal enemies, and come then to take my soul and to present it to the Eternal Judge. My Queen, do not abandon me; it is thou who after Jesus must be my help at that dreadful moment. Ask thy Son that in his goodness he may grant me the grace to die while embracing thy feet, and to breathe forth my soul into his sacred wounds while saying: Jesus and Mary, I give you my heart and my soul.

NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL.

A DEVOTION FOR THOSE WHO WEAR THE BROWN SCAPULAR.

(Novena begins July 7th and ends July 15th.)

First Day.

PREPARATORY PRAYER.

O glorious Queen of angels! most pure and ever-blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel! powerful advocate of all those who wear thy holy scapular! faithful protectress of all the servants of thy Son Jesus Christ! I, an unworthy sinner, do this day, in the presence of thy beloved Son, my Saviour, choose thee for my patroness, that through thy intercession I may receive from him whatsoever grace may be necessary and profitable for me now and at the hour of my death. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, *three times.*

PRAYER.

O most glorious and Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel! I, an unworthy wearer of thy holy scapular, confident, however, that the Church does not call thee in vain the "Refuge of sinners," do beseech thee to make me sensible of the favors thou hast conferred upon me by promoting the welfare of thy holy order, that, being truly contrite for past offences, I may, by thy aid and assistance, break the chains of my slavery and live henceforward in the happy liberty of the children of God. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Second Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O almighty and eternal God, vouchsafe to impart to us, Thy unworthy servants, a small portion of that heavenly grace with which Thou hast been pleased to sanctify Thy servant Mary; and grant that, through her intercession and protection, we may be shielded against all temptations, and be secure from all our enemies. Through

Our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, world without end. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Third Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

Remember, O most pious Virgin, it is a thing unheard of that thou hast ever forsaken those who have recourse to thee. Encouraged with this hope and confidence, my most dear Mother, I, a miserable sinner, cast myself at thy sacred feet, humbly begging that thou wilt adopt me as thy child forever, and take upon thee the care of my eternal salvation: do not, Mother of the Word Incarnate! reject my petition, but graciously hear and grant it. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Fourth Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O most glorious and ever-blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel! I, thy unworthy child and

client, sensible of the favors thou enjoyest with God, humbly present myself before thee, and beg that thou wilt intercede and obtain for me true contrition and repentance, an undefiled purity of heart, and a conscience free from sin and all offence against God. Direct me, I beseech thee, in all my actions during life, and in that awful moment when my poor soul departs from my body conduct it into the presence of thy Son, there to sing his praises for ever and ever. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Fifth Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O most glorious Virgin Mother! who, by favor of thy divine Son, hast so great power in heaven and on earth, enlighten my blindness and strengthen my resolution. The zeal thou hast in promoting the welfare of thy sacred Order, and the part thou takest in seeing the grace of Our Redeemer abound in us, give me a right to thy interest in this my request; and when that awful hour of death approaches, be to me, I beseech thee, a tender mother, and by thy prayers

dispose thy Son Jesus Christ favorably in my regard. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Sixth Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O most glorious and ever-virgin Mary of Mount Carmel! I offer unto thee this day all my thoughts, words, and actions. I am weak and infirm, dejected and cast down at every tribulation, and terrified at the dismal prospect a review of my own interior gives me. All is misery, a continual propensity to vice and repugnance to virtue. O Mother of mercy and Refuge of sinners! thou wilt not reject a contrite and humble heart. Intercede for me, I beseech thee, that I may so live in this sinful world that at the hour of death I may be worthy to be admitted into the regions of bliss. Through Our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Son liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Seventh Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O most holy Mary of Mount Carmel! pray for me, I beseech thee, that, through the merits of thy Son, I may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body, and that I may serve him faithfully in this life, and hereafter see, love, and enjoy him in the kingdom of his glory. Who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Eighth Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O most glorious and ever-blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel! faithful protectress of all those who wear thy holy scapular, behold thy poor servant humbly prostrate at thy feet, deploring his misery and imploring thy prayers, and beseeching thee to protect him through the stormy ocean of this tempestuous world; hear my prayers, then, O Refuge of sinners! and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O most clement, O most loving, O most sweet Virgin Mary!

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

Ninth Day.

Preparatory Prayer, Our Father, Hail Mary, *as on page 324.*

PRAYER.

O blessed finder of grace, Mother of life, Mother of salvation! may we through thee have access to thy Son; and that he who was given us through thee may receive us through thee, may thy integrity and innocence excuse before him the stain of our corruption; may thy abundant charity cover the multitude of our sins, and thy glorious fruitfulness supply our want of merits. Our Mother, our Mediatrix, our Advocate! reconcile us to thy Son, commend us to thy Son, present us to thy Son; by the grace with which thou art honored, obtain that he who through thee put on our weakness may through thee make us partakers of his bliss and glory. Amen.

Litany of the Blessed Virgin.

PRAYERS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE NOVENA.

O God, who hast deigned to honor the order of Carmel with the glorious title of Thy Virgin Mother, grant the grace of her protection to all who celebrate this solemn commemoration, so that through her we may attain eternal happiness. Amen.

O glorious Virgin Mary! Queen of Carmel, Mother of God and of poor sinners, special protectress of all those who wear thy holy scapular, I supplicate thee, by the glory that has been accorded thee by the Incarnate Word in choosing thee for his Mother, to obtain for me the pardon of my sins, amendment of my life, salvation of my soul, consolation in my pains, and in particular the grace I ask in this novena, provided it be conformable to the will of thy divine Son. Amen.

A SPECIAL PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL.

O most beautiful flower of Mount Carmel, fruitful wine, splendor of heaven, blessed Mother of the Son of God, immaculate Virgin, assist me in this my necessity. O Star of the Sea, help me, and show me herein thou art my Mother.

O holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of heaven and earth, I humbly beseech thee from the bottom of my heart to succor me in this necessity: there are none that can withstand thy power. Oh, show me herein thou art my Mother.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. (*Three times.*)

Sweet Mother, I place this cause in thy hands. (*Three times.*)

THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION.

(August 15th.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

The learned historians Colvenerius, Surius, and others hold that this feast originated with the Apostles. Even in the time of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, it was celebrated with great splendor (330).

"It is certain," writes Jacob Pamelius, choirmaster at Bruges, "that the Feast of the Assumption was celebrated in the days of St. Jerome and St. Augustine." St. Athanasius, St. Andrew of Crete, and others confirm this opinion.

At the request of the Emperor Mauritius, Nicephorus tells us, the feast was changed from the 18th of January to the 15th of August (582).

According to the testimony of the librarian Anastatius, Pope Sergius I. (687–701) issued a rescript ordering the manner of celebration, namely, as a feast of the first class, with processions, litanies, and vigils.

Pope Leo IV. further honored this feast in the year 847 by giving it an octave, a fast, and making it a holy day of obligation for the whole Christian world.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION.

(Novena begins August 6th and ends August 14th.)

First Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231.*

O Queen of all the virgin choir,
Enthroned above the starry sky!
Who with pure milk from thy own breast
Thy own Creator didst supply;

What man hath lost in hapless Eve,
Thy sacred womb to man restores;
Thou to the wretched here beneath
Hast opened heaven's eternal doors.

Hail, O refulgent hall of light!
Hail, gate sublime of heaven's high King!
Through thee redeemed to endless life,
Thy praise let all the nations sing.

O Jesu, born of Virgin bright!
Immortal glory be to Thee;
Praise to the Father infinite
And Holy Ghost eternally.

GLORY OF MARY IN DEATH.

She was well prepared to die.

Consider how glorious Mary was at the hour of her death, because in life she was so well prepared

to die, by her most ardent longing to see her God and be forever united to her Son, and by the unapproachable merit of her consummate perfection. Then, considering how different we are from Mary in our preparation for death we shall thus address her:

Holiest Virgin, who, to prepare thyself for a holy death, didst live in ceaseless longing for the vision of thy God, oh! do thou, virgin Mother! take from us the vain desire of the frail things of earth.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Holiest Virgin, who, to prepare thyself to die holily, didst in life sigh to be united forever to thy Son Jesus, oh! obtain for us fidelity to Jesus even unto death.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Holiest Virgin, who, to die holily, didst make it thy care to acquire a degree of merit and virtue unapproachable by any other than thyself, oh! intercede for us that we may know that virtue and the grace of God alone are the road that leads to salvation.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Now we will raise our voices in praise of Mary, who was so careful in preparing for death; and while we magnify her glory in union with the nine choirs of angels, who made her escort on her assumption into heaven, we shall say with the first choir:

The Litany of the Blessed Virgin and afterwards:

V. The holy Mother of God is exalted

R. High above the angel choirs to the heavenly kingdom.

Let us Pray.

We beseech Thee, Lord, pardon the shortcomings of Thy servants, that we, who by our own works are not able to please Thee, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

"God, who through," etc., *and* "O God, the Pastor," etc., *as on page 234.*

Second Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY IN DEATH.

She died in the midst of the Apostles and in the presence of her Son Jesus.

Consider how glorious Mary was at the hour of her death, comforted, according to the holy doctors of the Church, not only by the Apostles and saints, but also by her Son Jesus; and while we contemplate the unspeakable joy which she experienced in that hour through so extraordinary a favor, let us have recourse to her, saying:

Glorious Virgin, who for thy consolation didst deserve to die in the company of the Apostles and

saints, oh! may we feel thee nigh when we breathe forth our souls, and may our holy patrons too be there to lend their aid.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Glorious Virgin, who, at the moment of thy death, wast comforted by the sight of thy dear Son Jesus, oh! pray for us that at that awful moment we too may be comforted by receiving Jesus in the most holy Viaticum.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Glorious Virgin, who in the arms of Jesus didst give up thy spirit, aid us that we may also give up our souls in the arms of the same dear Lord, with this one desire, that his most holy will may be forever done in us.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us magnify Our Lady's glory, assisted at her death by her Son Jesus and his Apostles, joining in jubilee at her triumph with the second choir of the heavenly host, saying:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

Third Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY IN DEATH.

She died in an ecstasy of love.

Consider how glorious Mary was in her death, for she breathed forth her soul in an ecstasy of divine love. Wherefore, with eager longing to gather strength from that all-holy fire of love, let us have recourse to her, saying:

Mary, happiest Virgin, who didst give up thy mortal life through the vehemence of thy love for God, make it thy care that in our hearts, as God doth will, there be lit up this living fire of his love.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Mary, happiest Virgin, who, dying of pure love for God, didst show what our love for God should be, oh! pray for us, that we may never leave our God in life or death.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Mary, happiest Virgin, in leaving this mortal life through an ecstasy of love thou didst make known the fire which ever burned within thy breast, oh! pray for us, that at least one spark of that same fire may burn in us, giving us true sorrow for our sins.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

With the third choir of the angels let us exalt the ineffable glory of Mary, inflamed with burning love for God, saying:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

Fourth Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY AFTER DEATH.

In her dead body.

Consider how glorious Mary was after her death in her dead body; for from her body, clothed with majesty, most wondrous lustre shone, while it diffused around odors of sanctity, breathing the fragrance of paradise and by its mere presence working innumerable miracles. Then conscious of our many miseries, let us thus entreat her:

Lady unsullied, who by thy virginal purity didst merit the glory of being so bright and so majestic in thy body after death, oh! obtain for us the strength to detach ourselves from every foul spirit of impurity.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Lady unsullied, who through thy rare virtue didst exhale from thy dead body the sweet fragrance of paradise, make it thy care that by our life we may both edify our neighbor and never more by our bad example become a stumbling-block to others.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Lady unsullied, at the sight of whose sacred body were healed innumerable maladies, may thy prayers heal all our spiritual ills.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us rejoice at the glory given to the dead body of Mary, while with the fourth choir of the angels we exalt her majesty, saying:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

Fifth Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY AFTER DEATH.

In the resurrection of her body.

Consider how glorious Mary was after death, since by the power of the Most High her sacred body, raised to life, acquired in an instant the gifts of brightness, subtlety, agility, and impassibility; and, filled with consolation at the excellence of her surpassing glory, let us thus invoke her:

Lady exalted, who by thy God wast so gloriously raised to life, help us so to live on earth that we, too, like thee, may rise again on the last judgment day.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Lady exalted, whose risen body was endowed

with the gifts of brightness and subtlety, by the bright example and the humility of thy life on earth, oh! take from us all movements of disdain and scorn, that, freed from the trammels of self-love, our souls may be adorned with holy humility.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Lady exalted, God made thy risen body glorious with the gifts of agility and impassibility, because great was thy spiritual zeal and patience while on earth, oh! obtain for us courage to mortify with vigor our bodies, and to curb with patience our headstrong passions.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us give to Mary the praise which is due to her and magnify the glory which adorns her risen body, while with the fifth choir of the angels we honor her, saying:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

Sixth Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY AFTER DEATH.

In her assumption into heaven.

Consider how Mary was gloriously taken up to heaven, for she was escorted by legions of the

heavenly hosts and by blessed souls delivered by her merits from purgatory; and, joining in the majesty of her triumph, let us with all humility offer to her our supplications:

Great Queen, assumed so royally into the kingdom of eternal peace, oh! take from us all sordid earthly thoughts, and give us grace to fix our hearts firmly on the contemplation of the changeless bliss of heaven.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Great Queen, who in thy assumption into heaven wast surrounded by the heavenly hosts, obtain for us strength to master Satan's wiles and to lend a docile ear to the good counsels of that blessed Spirit who directs our path and aids our tottering steps.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Great Queen, by the glory which thou didst enjoy in thy assumption into heaven from the company of the souls drawn by thy merits out of purgatory, obtain for us, that, freed from the slavery of sin, we may deserve to praise thee for all eternity.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us not cease to applaud Mary's royal triumph and the extraordinary glory which she obtained in her solemn assumption into heaven, but with the sixth choir of the angels let us honor her, saying:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

SEVENTH DAY.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY AFTER DEATH.

In her assumption into heaven.

Consider how glorious Mary is in heaven, where, as Queen of the universe, she is enthroned, and from countless hosts of angels and of saints is ever receiving homage and veneration. Wherefore, bending before her royal throne, we, too, implore her aid:

Sovereign Queen of the universe, who, through thy incomparable merit, art raised to such high glory in heaven, oh! in thy pity, look down on us and on our miseries, and with the gentle sway of thy protection rule over us.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Sovereign Queen of the universe, who on thy throne art ever receiving worship and homage from all the heavenly hosts, suffer us, we beseech thee, to address thee, and grant that our invocations may be made with such reverence as befits thy dignity and greatness.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Sovereign Queen of the universe, by that glory

which accrues to thee from thy preëminent dignity in heaven, vouchsafe to take us for thy servants, and obtain for us that we may be quick and ready in the faithful observance of the commands of our God and Lord.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us enter in some way into the joy which angels feel while they praise Mary, and be exceedingly glad, because we know that she is raised to the dignity of Queen of the universe, while with the seventh choir of the angels we say:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

Eighth Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY AFTER DEATH.

From the crown which adorns her brow.

Consider how glorious Mary is in heaven from the royal diadem wherewith her divine Son hath crowned her, and from the vast knowledge which she has of the deep mysteries of God, past, present, and to come; and, full of reverence for the incomparable honors bestowed upon our great Queen, let us have recourse to her, saying:

Peerless Queen, who in heaven on high wast crowned with a priceless royal diadem by thy

divine Son, make us share thy matchless virtues, that, purified in heart and mind, we may be worthy to wear a crown with thee in paradise.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Peerless Queen, by that wide knowledge of all things in and on earth granted thee, for thy glory's sake win pardon for our past offences, and never let us anger thee again by forward tongue or wanton thought.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Peerless Queen, who would see us pure and stainless that we may be fit to stand before thy God, obtain for us forgiveness of our sins, and help us ever in look and word and deed to please his heavenly majesty.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us purify our hearts to give meet praise to Mary, and to the glory she possesses in that bright crown which decks her royal brow let us add these humble tokens of our love, while with the joy of the eighth choir of the angels saying:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 335.*

Ninth Day.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231;* O Queen of all the virgin choir, etc., *as on page 333.*

GLORY OF MARY AFTER DEATH.

In her patronage of men.

Consider how glorious Mary is in heaven by her patronage of men, and because she is able and most anxious to aid them in their needs. With most lively confidence, because for our patroness we have the very Mother of our God, let us with all our heart beseech her:

Mary, our most powerful patroness, who in heaven dost glory in being the advocate of men, preserve us from our infernal foe, and place us in the arms of him who is our God and our Creator.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Mary, our most powerful patroness, who in heaven art the advocate of men, and dost wish that all men should be saved, grant that none of us despair when we behold our past relapses into sin.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Mary, our most powerful patroness, whose delight it ever is, in the fulfilment of thine office, to be invoked by men, obtain for us true devotion, and make it thy care that we never fail to call thee to our aid in life, and, above all, at the awful moment of our death.

Hail Mary, *three times.*

Let us celebrate with all our heart the glory of Mary, and, full of consolation at the thought that

we have in heaven an advocate, let us unite with the ninth choir of the angels in praising her, while we say:

The Litany, etc.

The holy Mother of God is exalted, etc., *as on page 333.*

For making the above novena an indulgence of three hundred days every day, and a plenary indulgence on the festival itself or on any day of its octave.—Pius VII., Aug. 4 and Nov. 24, 1808; Jan. 11, 1809.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST.

I.

Mary died; but how did she die? She died entirely detached from all created things; she died consumed by that divine love which during her whole life had always inflamed her most holy heart.

O holy Mother, thou hast already left the earth; do not forget us miserable pilgrims who remain in this valley of tears, struggling against so many enemies who wish to drag us to hell. Ah, by the merits of thy precious death be graciously pleased to obtain us detachment from earthly things, the forgiveness of our sins, love of God, and holy perseverance; and when the hour of death arrives, help us from heaven with thy prayers, and obtain for us that we may kiss thy feet in paradise.

II.

Mary died, and her most pure body was carried by the holy Apostles and placed in the sepulchre, where it was guarded by angels for three days; after which it was transported to paradise; but her beautiful soul entered the blessed kingdom at the very moment in which she expired, accompanied by innumerable angels, and also accompanied by her Son himself. When she had entered heaven, she humbly presented herself before God, adored him, and with immense feeling thanked him for the many graces which he had bestowed upon her. God embraced her, blessed her, and declared her Queen of the universe, exalting her above all the angels and saints. But now, if, as the Apostle says, the human mind cannot comprehend the immense glory which God has prepared in heaven for his servants who have loved him in this world, how great must be the glory which he bestowed on this most holy Mother, who on earth loved him more than all the saints and angels, and loved him with all her strength: so that when Mary entered heaven she alone could say to God, "O Lord, if on earth I did not love Thee as much as Thou deservedst, at least I loved Thee as much as I could love Thee."

III.

Let us rejoice with Mary at the glory with which God has enriched her. Let us also rejoice for ourselves; for at the same time that Mary was made Queen of the world, she was also made our advocate. She is so compassionate an advocate that she accepts the causes of all sinners who recommend themselves to her; and she also has so great power with our Judge that she gains all causes which she defends.

Example.

St. Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan and Cardinal of the Holy Roman Catholic Church, takes a high rank among the devoted servants of Mary. This energetic shepherd who worked so hard and beneficently for his flocks during hard and bitter times, was convinced that the efforts for the conversion of sinners and the salvation of men can bear but little fruit unless we have the blessing from on high. With this thought he had constant recourse to Jesus and Mary. Even as a boy he visited daily a church dedicated to Mary. Her protection enabled him to withstand the temptations against chastity to which he was subject as a youth. He recited the Rosary every day and the Office of the Blessed Virgin and fasted, on the vigils of her feasts, on bread and water. If he was on the street or the highway when the Angelus rang he knelt down on the spot to say the prayer. He used the authority of his high position to spread the devotion to Mary. He ordered that an image of Mary be placed at the entrance of all the churches in the province to re-

mind the people that we must look for help from God through her who is the chief source of his grace to men, and that we cannot otherwise enter the temple of eternal glory but through the intercession of the Blessed Mother, she whom the Church calls the Gate of heaven. How fruitful his devotion was, both for his people and for himself is shown by the great good he was enabled to accomplish during life and by his personal saintliness.

A Prayer to the Blessed Virgin.

O thou most holy Virgin Mary, who dost evermore stand before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, and to whom it is granted at all times to pray for us to thy most beloved Son, pray for me in all my necessities; help me, combat for me, give thanks for me, and obtain for me the pardon of all my sins. Help me especially at my last hour; and when I can no longer give any sign of the use of reason, then do thou encourage me, make the sign of the cross for me, sprinkle me with holy water, and fight for me against the enemy. Make in my name a profession of faith, favor me with a testimony of my salvation, and never let me despair of the mercy of God. Help me to overcome the wicked enemy; and when I can no longer say, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I place my soul in your hands," say it for me; and when I can no longer hear human words of consolation, then do thou comfort me. Leave me not before I have been judged; and may the divine heart of Jesus and the immaculate heart of Mary be known, praised, blessed, loved, worshipped, and glorified always and in all places. Amen.

1. Indulgence of sixty days once a day.

2. A plenary indulgence on the Feasts of the Nativity, of the Assumption, and of the Immaculate Heart of Mary to all those who shall have said

the above prayer every day during the year when, being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they shall visit a church or an altar in any church dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and pray for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

3. A plenary indulgence at the hour of death to those who during life shall have practised this pious exercise every day.

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY.

(September 8th.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

The celebration of the feast probably had its origin in the Greek Church after the Council of Ephesus convened to oppose the teachings of Nestorius, who particularly attacked the Mother of God, urging that she had no right to be called thus, as there were two separate natures in Christ, the divine and the human, and she was only the mother of the human. In the Western Church, where the heresies of Nestorius had but little influence, its celebration began later. St. Ildephonsus, who lived in the seventh century, mentions the feast, and collects, processions, matins, and a special preface for the Mass of this day were in existence in the time of Gregory the Great.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF OUR LADY'S NATIVITY.

(Novena begins August 30th and ends September 7th.)

NINE GREETINGS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Come, Holy Ghost, etc., *as on page 231.*

Most holy Mary, chosen and predestined from all eternity by the Most Holy Trinity to be the Mother of the only-begotten Son of the Eternal Father, foretold by the prophets, longed for by the patriarchs, desired by all nations, sanctuary and living temple of the Holy Ghost, sun without blemish, because conceived free from original sin, Mistress of heaven and of earth, Queen of angels, humbly prostrate at thy feet we give thee our homage, rejoicing that the year has brought round again the memory of thy sweet nativity. With all our hearts we pray thee to vouchsafe in thy goodness to come down again and be born in spirit in our souls, that, led captive by thy loveliness and sweetness, they may ever live united to thy most sweet and loving heart.

Now, with nine distinct greetings, we shall go back in thought to the nine months thou didst pass within the cloister of thy mother's womb, and say devoutly:

1. We hail thee, Mary, who, sprung from the

royal line of David, didst come forth from the light of heaven with high honor from the womb of holy Anne, thy most happy mother.

Hail Mary, etc.

2. We hail thee, heavenly babe, white dove of purity, who, despite the infernal serpent, wast conceived free from the taint of Adam's sin.

Hail Mary, etc.

3. We hail thee, brightest morn, forerunner of the heavenly Sun of Justice, who didst first bring light to earth.

Hail Mary, etc.

4. We hail thee, O chosen one! who, like the untarnished sun, didst burst forth into being in the dark night of sin.

Hail Mary, etc.

5. We hail thee, beauteous moon, who didst shed light upon a world wrapped in the thickest darkness of idolatry.

Hail Mary, etc.

6. We hail thee, strong infant, who, in thyself a host, alone didst put to flight all hell.

Hail Mary, etc.

7. We hail thee, fair soul of Mary, who from all eternity wast God's and God's alone.

Hail Mary, etc.

8. We hail thee, dear child, and we humbly worship thy most holy infant body; we venerate

the sacred swaddling-clothes wherewith they bound thee, the sacred cradle wherein they laid thee, and we bless the hour and the moment when thou wast born.

Hail Mary, etc.

9. We hail thee, beloved child, adorned with every virtue, immeasurably above all the saints, and, therefore, worthy Mother of the Saviour of the world; who, made fruitful by the Holy Ghost, didst bring forth the Incarnate Word.

Hail Mary, etc.

PRAYER.

Most lovely child, who by thy birth hast comforted the world, made glad the heavens, struck terror into hell, brought help to the fallen, consolation to the sad, health to the sick, joy to all, we pray thee, with all fervent love, be thou born again in spirit in our souls through thy most holy love; renew our fervor in thy service, rekindle in our hearts the fire of thy love, and bid all virtues blossom there which may cause us to find more and more favor in thy gracious eyes. Mary! be thou Mary to us, and may we feel the saving power of thy sweetest name; let it ever be our comfort to call on that great name in all our troubles; let it be our hope in dangers, our shield in temptation, and in death our last murmur.

May the name of Mary be honey in our mouths, melody in our ears, ecstasy in our hearts. Amen.

Then say the Litany, and afterward:

V. Thy nativity, O Virgin Mother of God!

R. Hath brought joy to a whole world.

Let us Pray.

Grant to us, Thy servants, we beseech Thee, Lord, the gift of heavenly grace, that to those for whom the delivery of the Blessed Virgin was the commencement of salvation the votive festival of her nativity may give increasing peace. Amen.

For making the above novena an indulgence of three hundred days each time, and a plenary indulgence on any day during the novena or its octave.—Pius IX., Jan. 5, 1849.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE FEAST.

I.

Before the birth of Mary the world was lost in the darkness of sin. "Mary was born and the dawn arose," says a holy Father. Of Mary it had already been said: *Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?* (Cant. vi. 9.) As the earth rejoices when the dawn appears, because it is the precursor of the sun, so also when Mary was born the whole world rejoiced, because she was the pre-

cursor of Jesus Christ, the Sun of Justice, who being made her Son, came to save us by his death; hence the Church sings, "Thy nativity, O Virgin Mother of God, announced joy to the whole world; for from thee arose the Sun of Justice, who has given us life eternal." So that when Mary was born, our remedy, our consolation, and our salvation came into the world; for through Mary we received Our Saviour.

II.

This child being, then, destined to become the Mother of the Eternal Word, God enriched her with so great grace that in the first moment of her Immaculate Conception her sanctity exceeded that of all the saints and angels together, for she received grace of a higher order—one that corresponded to the dignity of Mother of God.

O holy child! O full of grace! I, miserable sinner that I am, salute and adore thee. Thou art the beloved one, the delight of God; pity me, who on account of my sins have been hateful and abominable in his sight. Thou, O most pure Virgin, knewest from thy very childhood so well how to gain the heart of God, that he never did and never will refuse thee anything, and grants thee all that thou askest. My hopes are therefore in

thee; recommend me to thy Son, and I shall be saved.

III.

When Mary was destined to be the Mother of God, she was also destined to become the mediatress between God and sinners. Hence the angelic St. Thomas says "that Mary received sufficient grace to save all men," and therefore St. Bernard calls her "a full aqueduct, that of her plenitude we all may partake."

Example.

At Courtrai, in Flanders, there was a criminal who had been condemned to death; but he was obstinate, and refused to make his confession. A Jesuit Father did all he could to convert him. This good Father entreated him, wept, cast himself at his feet; but seeing that all was time lost, he at length said, "Now let us recite a Hail Mary together." The criminal did so, and in an instant began to weep bitterly, confessed his sins with great compunction, and desired to die clasping an image of Mary in his arms.

Prayer of the Venerable Louis Blosius.

Hail Mary, hope of those who are in despair, help of the destitute! Hail, thou whom thy Son so greatly honors, that whatever thou askest, thou dost at once obtain; whatever thou willest is at once done. To thee are the treasures of the kingdom of heaven intrusted. Grant, O Lady, that amid the storms of this life I may always remember thee. To thy char-

itable mercy I commend my soul and body. O my sweet protectress, direct and protect me in every hour, in every moment of my life. Amen.

THE ROSARY AND ITS FEAST.

(Feast on the first Sunday in October.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

It is well known that the devotion of the most holy Rosary was revealed to St. Dominic by the divine Mother herself in the year 1206, when the saint was in affliction, and bewailing, with his Sovereign Lady, over the Albigensian heretics, who were at that time doing great mischief to the Church. The Blessed Virgin said to him: "This land will always be sterile until rain falls on it." St. Dominic was then given to understand that this rain was the devotion of the Rosary, which he was to propagate. This the saint indeed did, and it was embraced by all Catholics; so much so that, even to the present day, there is no devotion so generally practised by the faithful of all classes as that of the Rosary. It has the approval of the Church, and the Sovereign Pontiffs have enriched it with indulgences to spur the faithful to its frequent

practice. Benedict XIII., on April 13, 1726, granted *an indulgence of one hundred days* for every "Our Father" and every "Hail Mary" to all the faithful who, with devotion and at least contrite heart, shall say either the whole Rosary of fifteen decades, or a third part of it, that is five decades. And if they recite the whole or at least five decades for every day for a year, they can gain a plenary indulgence on any day of their choice after confession and Communion.

To gain these indulgences, we must have a rosary that has been blessed by a priest who has the power to bless it; and in reciting it we must meditate on the mysteries of the birth, the Passion, and the resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the following order for the fifteen decades, each composed of one "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys," and one "Glory be to the Father:"

Joyful mysteries: The annunciation, the visitation, the birth, the presentation of Jesus in the Temple, the finding of Jesus in the Temple.

Sorrowful mysteries: The sufferings of Jesus in the garden, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, the crucifixion.

Glorious mysteries: The resurrection, the ascension, the coming of the Holy Ghost, the assumption of the Blessed Virgin, her coronation in heaven.

When we recite only five decades, we meditate according to our devotion on the joyful, the sorrowful, or the glorious mysteries; those who are unable to meditate on these divine mysteries may gain the indulgence by merely saying the Rosary devoutly.

The faithful who are members of the Confraternity of the holy Rosary can gain many other indulgences, either by reciting the Rosary, or by performing other good works.

His Holiness Pius IX., to encourage devotion to the Blessed Virgin, especially through the Rosary, in the recitation of which the mysteries of our Redemption are also considered, in May, 1851, confirmed all indulgences granted by his predecessors and added besides *an indulgence of ten years and ten times forty days* to those who recite the Rosary of five decades either in public, in private, or in company with others. And if persons have the habit of thus reciting it at least three times a week they can gain a *plenary indulgence* on the last Sunday of every month, provided on that day after confession and Communion they visit a church or a public oratory and pray there for some time for the intention of his Holiness.

These different indulgences are applicable to the souls in purgatory.

Here we may call to mind what the Blessed Virgin said to St. Eulalia, "that she was better pleased with five decades said slowly and devoutly than with fifteen said in a hurry and with little devotion." It is, therefore, well to say the Rosary kneeling, before an image of Mary; and, before each decade, to make an act of love to Jesus and Mary, and ask them for some particular grace. It is also preferable to say it with others rather than alone.

It was on the day of the celebration of the Feast of the Rosary, October 7, 1571, that the great victory of Lepanto was won. Don John of Austria, under the protection of the powerful Queen of the Rosary, defeated the Turkish army and effectually checked the Mohammedan prestige in Europe. The Turks under Selim II., the son of the terrible Suleiman, had gathered their forces for the final overpowering of Christianity. They had 250 large ships and many smaller ones, manned by 120,000 sailors and soldiers who had the reputation of being unconquerable and had thus far been unconquered. The Christians had but 80,000 men and 300 ships. Nevertheless they succeeded in sinking 210 Turkish vessels, with a loss of only 15 galleys of their own. So great and beneficent a victory, won on a day when all the Christian world was keeping holy the Feast

of the Rosary by public processions and prayers and asking that the Mohammedan peril be turned back from Europe, was rightfully considered to be due to the protection and intercession of Mary. Pius V. therefore appointed a special day of thanksgiving to Our Lady of Victory. Gregory XIII. confirmed it and ordered also that in future in all churches where there is a chapel or an altar dedicated to the Rosary the Feast of the Rosary should be celebrated on the first Sunday in October, which order Clement X. extended to all churches in Spain.

When Charles VI. defeated 180,000 Turks at Temeswar in Hungary, on the Feast of Mary of the Snows, while almost at the same time a confraternity of the holy Rosary was entreating the favor of heaven by a public procession in Rome and moreover the Turkish siege of Corfu was raised in the octave of the Feast of the Assumption, Pope Clement XI. was moved to ascribe these wonderful victories to the protection of the Blessed Virgin also. He thereupon issued a bull ordering that henceforth the Feast of the Rosary should be kept in all the churches of Christendom to inflame the hearts of the faithful with gratitude towards the Blessed Virgin so that the memory of the help received through her may never be forgotten.

Pope Benedict XIII. ordered that all these things should be included in the Roman breviary. Thus encouraged by the Church, the people have taken up this mode of prayer, carry their beads with them, and often use them in preference to a prayer-book. Pope Leo XIII. has made the Rosary his special devotion, and has year after year called the attention of the people to it. The Rosary is the holiest of the devotions, for it is the life of Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin. It is the most consoling prayer, for through the merits of Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin we will obtain eternal salvation. St. Francis de Sales in his hard apostolic labors found time to recite the entire Rosary every day.

St. Alphonsus Rodriguez found in the beads and the meditation made during their recitation all instruction in Christian perfection.

In all our necessities we can recite the beads and ask God's assistance through Mary, Queen of the holy Rosary.

Example.

About twenty years ago there lived in the south of Italy a lawyer, Signor Bartolo Longo, who, far from being a saint, had forsaken his religion and indulged in spiritualism and magnetism. But during the month of October, 1872, he was miraculously struck by divine grace on the very spot on which

afterwards arose the sanctuary of Our Lady of Pompeii.

One day he was wandering alone in a wild spot in the valley of Pompeii, meditating on the best way to atone for his sins, to find again the peace and happiness of the days when he was still true to his religion, when suddenly he heard a sweet voice saying to him: "Wilt thou find peace again? Spread my Rosary, for whoever propagates the devotion of the Rosary shall never perish." He answered: "If thy promise is sure, I am saved, and I am happy once more, for I shall spread thy Rosary."

He set about to spread the devotion to the holy Rosary of Our Lady of Pompeii, and in less than twenty years, on the very spot where he had heard the voice, there stood, commenced by poor peasants, finished, thanks to the offerings of the entire world, the sanctuary which Pope Leo XIII. has taken under his special patronage. Thousands of pilgrims from all parts of the world go there every year to venerate the picture of Our Lady which is there, framed in gold and precious stones. The Holy Father has attached numerous privileges to this sanctuary, and many wonderful graces have been obtained and many miracles performed.

Prayer of St. Bernard.

To thee we cry, O Queen of mercy! return, that we may behold thee dispensing favors, bestowing remedies, giving strength. Show us thy compassionate looks, and we shall be saved.

O sovereign Lady of all things, Saint of saints, our strength and refuge, God, as it were, of the world, glory of heaven, accept those who love thee; hear us, for thy Son honors thee and denies thee nothing.

Thou art, O Mary! a field filled with treasures. Thou art full of virtues, full of graces. The enemy of salvation was never able to hurt thee, finding thee always surrounded by impenetrable bucklers, and fortified with all the arms that he feared. Thou alone didst possess all the perfections and all the merits of all the saints united. O our sovereign Lady and our Advocate, commend us to thy Son. Grant, O blessed one, by the grace which thou hast merited, that he who through thee was graciously pleased to become a partaker of our infirmity and misery, may also, through thy intercession make us partakers of his happiness and glory.

CONFRATERNITY OF THE ROSARY.

The object of this Confraternity is to recite the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin. To gain the indulgences the members must recite the whole Rosary at least once a week, meditate on the mysteries, and carry beads that have been blessed. If possible one should join a Rosary society, for in a society more benefits are gained than in offering petitions alone. Besides many of the indulgences granted to the Rosary were granted in view of the united prayers of the members of the society.

Indulgences.—Plenary, on reception, at the hour of death, on the first Sunday of the month, on the third Sunday of April, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity, Corpus Christi, Christmas, Patronal Feast of the Church, Sunday after

Assumption, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin and Good Friday, and on all the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, if they visit a chapel of the Rosary. All the indulgences of the Stations of Rome, by visiting five altars in the church of the Rosary, or if but one, that altar five times. Many partial indulgences.

N.B.—The faithful, generally, on the usual conditions, gain a plenary indulgence in the church or chapel of the Rosary on Sundays in Lent, Easter, Pentecost, Trinity, Corpus Christi, first Sunday of October, and feasts of St. Dominic, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Vincent Ferrer, and other saints of the Dominican order.

THE LIVING ROSARY.

The Living Rosary is formed by bands or circles consisting each of fifteen persons, who, every month, divide among themselves the fifteen mysteries of the Dominican Rosary, so that each member will daily recite for a month a decade in honor of the mystery allotted to him.

It is the duty of a member to recite daily one "Our Father," ten "Hail Marys" with a "Glory be to the Father," while meditating on the mystery that fell to his lot for the current month.

In order that the members may be enabled to

recite their respective decades in the right manner so as to gain the graces, benefits, and privileges of the Living Rosary, they must remember that this duty comprises three distinct parts, viz., oral prayer, meditation, and the use of blessed beads. The first is, as it were, the body; the second, the soul of this devotion; while the third is like the signs on the way along which it moves. The following are the main points to be observed in each part:

Oral Prayer.—The decade begins with the "Our Father," continues with ten "Hail Marys," and ends with the "Glory be to the Father." No other prayers need be said, nor may others be said instead. Custom, however, has made it a rule that persons to whom the first joyful mystery is allotted recite, moreover, the "Creed," "Our Father," and three "Hail Marys" (to ask for the divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity) before their decade. It is not enough to say this prayer mentally, going through the decade in the mind only; but the words must be clearly and distinctly pronounced with the lips. Still, to let some words or a few "Hail Marys" slip would not make one lose the indulgences. The prayer may be said in any respectful posture; it is not necessary to kneel.

The Meditation.—To gain the indulgences one

must meditate on the mystery of his decade, not on any other. To meditate means here that he must with his thoughts dwell on the history, event, or fact of that mystery; turn it over in his mind; look in his mind at the persons concerned in the mystery, see their actions, hear their words, guess their thoughts and feelings, notice their surroundings and places, and ask himself what all that means. Then he should try to excite in his heart suitable and proper sentiments and acts of faith, hope, charity, gratitude, contrition, humility, fear of God, and make good resolutions, to be kept with the help of God. All this, however, is done in the mind, in the soul only; it is not to be spoken in words. Again, no special time is needed for it, as it can be made while reciting the "Hail Marys," by simply thinking of the mystery and keeping it present before the mind.

Involuntary or only a few wilful and short distractions do not deprive one of the indulgences; but frequent and long voluntary distractions do certainly diminish the merit and fruits of the devotion and endanger the indulgences.

The Beads.—Members reciting their decade must hold in their hands a Rosary blessed with the special Dominican formula by a priest who has the requisite faculty. When several persons recite

a decade or more together, it is enough that one of them have a blessed Rosary in his hand. This Rosary must have five or ten or fifteen decades, not more nor less, as the indulgence of the Dominican Rosary cannot be attached to Rosaries of three, six, seven, or only one decade. The beads must be solid and strong, so as not to break easily or to wear away.

Blessed Rosaries lose the blessing and indulgences by the death of their owner; by being given away (unless one had them blessed for others, or with the intention of afterwards giving them away, in which case one may not use them first himself), sold, exchanged, or lent to another with the intention that he shall gain the indulgences attached (but not when lent and borrowed only in order to count the "Hail Marys"); also where a good number, say ten or more, of the grains of beads are lost or taken off without being supplied by new ones.

The blessing and indulgences are not lost by a breakage (intentional or accidental) of the string: by the loss of a few beads; by replacing some bead in the wrong decade; nor by having some other indulgences attached to the same Rosary. Broken or lost grains may be replaced by new ones without the Rosary losing the blessing if the new beads are less in number than the remaining old ones.

The cross or the crucifix and the three or four extra beads are not necessary; their loss does not impair the blessing. Special indulgences, distinct from those of the Rosary, may be attached to that cross or crucifix.

It is a beautiful custom to have a devotion in common (in the church, chapel, school, or in a hall) on Sundays and special feast-days. The assembled members recite in common either a chaplet (five decades) or the whole Rosary (fifteen decades); sing hymns of the mystery of the feast, or of the Blessed Virgin, or of the saint of the day. Other prayers (litanies) in harmony with the character of the feast may also be said.

PRIVILEGES AND INDULGENCES.

Community of Spiritual Goods.—Members of the Living Rosary have part in all the good works (Masses, functions, and works of the ministry, vigils, fasts, penances, works of corporal and spiritual mercy) and merits of the whole Dominican order.

Partial Indulgences.—To gain these it is necessary to say the prayers prescribed while using a blessed Rosary.

By daily reciting the monthly decade: one hundred days on every week day; seven years and seven times forty days on all Sundays and holy-

days, also the suppressed ones, and during the octaves (that is, the next seven days) of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi; the Assumption, Nativity, and Immaculate Conception of the B. V. M.

For every "Our Father" and for every "Hail Mary": one hundred days.

Plenary Indulgences.—These may all be applied to the souls in purgatory. Confession and holy Communion, and some prayers for the intention of the Holy Father, are required in each case. Those who go weekly to the sacraments can gain all the plenary indulgences falling within the week, without extra confession, provided they are in the state of grace.

MEDITATIONS FOR THE ROSARY.

THE FIVE JOYFUL MYSTERIES.

I. The Annunciation.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the angel Gabriel saluted our blessed Lady with the title "full of grace," and declared unto her the Incarnation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Our Father, ten Hail Marys, Glory be to the Father.

PRAYER.

O holy Mary, Queen of virgins, through the most high mystery of the Incarnation of thy beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, wherein our salvation was begun, obtain for us, through thy most holy intercession, light to understand the greatness of the benefit he hath bestowed upon us, in vouchsafing to become our Brother, and giving thee, his own beloved Mother, to be our Mother also. Amen.

II. The Visitation.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the Blessed Virgin Mary, understanding from the angel that her cousin St. Elizabeth had conceived, went with haste into the mountains of Judea to visit her, bearing her divine Son within her womb, and remained with her three months.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O holy Virgin, most spotless mirror of humility, by that exceeding charity which moved thee to visit thy holy cousin St. Elizabeth, obtain for us, through thine intercession, that our hearts being visited by thy divine Son, and freed from all sin, we may praise and give thanks to him forever. Amen.

III. The Birth of Christ Our Saviour in Bethlehem.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the Blessed Virgin Mary, when the time of her delivery was come, brought forth Our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, at midnight, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the inns at Bethlehem.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O most pure Mother of God, through thy virginal and most joyful delivery, whereby thou gavest to the world thy only Son, Our Saviour, we beseech thee obtain for us, through thine intercession, the grace to lead such pure and holy lives in this world that we may become worthy to sing without ceasing the mercies of thy Son, and his benefits to us by thee. Amen.

IV. The Presentation of our Blessed Lord in the Temple.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the Blessed Virgin Mary, on the day of her purification, presented the Child Jesus in the Temple, where holy Simeon, giving thanks to God, with great devotion received him into his arms.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O holy Virgin, most admirable mistress and pattern of obedience, who didst present the Lord of the Temple in the Temple of God, obtain for us, of thy blessed Son, that, with holy Simeon and devout Anna, we may praise and glorify him forever. Amen.

V. The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the Blessed Virgin Mary, after having lost (through no fault of hers) her beloved Son in Jerusalem, sought him for the space of three days, and at length found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions, being of the age of twelve years.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O most blessed Virgin, more than martyr in thy sufferings, and yet the comfort of such as are afflicted, by that unspeakable joy wherewith thy soul was filled when at length thou didst find thy well-beloved Son in the Temple, teaching in the midst of the doctors, obtain of him that we may so seek him and find him in his holy Catholic

Church as nevermore to be separated from him. Amen.

THE SALVE REGINA.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, etc. (See page 189.)

V. Make me worthy to praise thee, holy Virgin.

R. Give me strength against thine enemies.

V. Blessed be God in his saints.

R. Amen.

Then say the following prayers:

Hear, O merciful God, the prayer of Thy servants, that we who meet together in the society of the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, may, through her intercession, be delivered by Thee from the dangers that continually hang over us; through the merits of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

O God, whose only-begotten Son, by his life, death, and resurrection, hath laid open to us the rewards of everlasting life, grant, we beseech Thee, that, pondering in our hearts these mysteries in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may imitate what they set forth, and obtain what they promise; through the same Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE FIVE SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

I. The Prayer and Bloody Sweat of our Blessed Saviour in the Garden.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ was so afflicted for us in the Garden of Gethsemani that his body was bathed in a bloody sweat, which ran down in great drops to the ground.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O most holy Virgin, more than martyr, by that ardent prayer which our beloved Saviour poured forth to his heavenly Father in the Garden, vouchsafe to intercede for us, that our passions being reduced to the obedience of reason, we may always, and in all things, conform and subject ourselves to the holy will of God. Amen.

II. The Scourging of our Blessed Lord at the Pillar.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ was most cruelly scourged in Pilate's house, the number of stripes they gave him being about five thousand.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O Mother of God, overflowing fountain of patience, through those stripes thy only and much-beloved Son vouchsafed to suffer for us, obtain of him for us grace to mortify our rebellious senses, to avoid the occasion of sin, and to be ready to suffer everything rather than offend God. Amen.

III. The Crowning of our Blessed Saviour with Thorns.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how those cruel ministers of Satan platted a crown of sharp thorns and cruelly pressed it on the sacred head of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O Mother of our eternal Prince, the King of glory, by those sharp thorns wherewith his sacred head was pierced, we beseech thee, obtain, through thy intercession, that we may be delivered from all notions of pride, and escape that shame which our sins deserve at the day of judgment. Amen.

IV. Jesus Carrying His Cross.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ, being sentenced to die, bore,

with the most amazing patience, the cross which was laid upon him for his greater torment and ignominy.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O holy Virgin, example of patience, by the most painful carrying of the cross, in which thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, bore the heavy weight of our sins, obtain for us of him, through thine intercession, courage and strength to follow his steps, and bear our cross after him to the end of our lives. Amen.

V. The Crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ, being come to Mount Calvary, was stripped of his clothes, and his hands and feet nailed to the cross, in the presence of his most afflicted Mother.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O holy Mary, Mother of God, as the body of thy beloved Son was for us stretched upon the cross, so may we offer up our souls and bodies to be crucified with him, and our hearts to be pierced with grief at his most bitter Passion; and

thou, O most sorrowful Mother, graciously vouchsafe to help us, by thy all-powerful intercession, to accomplish the work of our salvation. Amen.

Salve Regina and prayers, as before.

THE FIVE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

I. The Resurrection of Our Lord from the Dead.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ, triumphing gloriously over death, rose again the third day, immortal and impassible.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O glorious Virgin Mary, by that unspeakable joy thou didst receive in the resurrection of thy divine Son we beseech thee obtain for us of him that our hearts may never go astray after the false joys of this world, but may be forever wholly employed in the pursuit of the only true and solid joys of heaven. Amen.

II. The Ascension of Christ into Heaven.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ, forty days after his resurrection, ascended into heaven, attended by angels, in the sight and to the great admiration of his

most holy Mother, and his holy Apostles and disciples.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O Mother of God, Comfortress of the afflicted, as thy beloved Son, when he ascended into heaven, lifted up his hands and blessed his Apostles as he was parted from them, so vouchsafe, most holy Mother, to lift up thy pure hands to him in our behalf that we may enjoy the benefits of his blessing, and of thine, here on earth and hereafter in heaven. Amen.

III. The Descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how Our Lord Jesus Christ, being seated on the right hand of God, sent, as he had promised, the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, who, after he was ascended, returning to Jerusalem, continued in prayer and supplication with the Blessed Virgin Mary, expecting the performance of his promise.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O sacred Virgin, tabernacle of the Holy Ghost, we beseech thee obtain, by thine intercession, that this most sweet Comforter, whom thy beloved

Son sent down upon his Apostles, filling them thereby with spiritual joy, may teach us in this world the true way of salvation, and make us to walk in the path of virtue and good works. Amen.

IV. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the glorious Virgin, twelve years after the resurrection of her Son, passed out of this world unto him, and was by him assumed into heaven, accompanied by the holy angels.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O most prudent Virgin, who, entering the heavenly palaces, didst fill the angels with joy and man with hope, vouchsafe to intercede for us at the hour of our death, that, being delivered from the illusions and temptations of the devil, we may joyfully and securely pass out of this temporal state, to enjoy the happiness of eternal life. Amen.

V. The Coronation of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary in Heaven.

Let us contemplate in this mystery how the glorious Virgin Mary was, to the great jubilee and

exultation of the whole court of heaven, and particular glory of all the saints, crowned by her Son with the brightest diadem of glory.

Our Father, etc.

PRAYER.

O glorious Queen of the heavenly host, we beseech thee accept this Rosary, which, as a crown of roses, we offer at thy feet; and grant, most gracious Lady, that, by thy intercession, our souls may be inflamed with so ardent a desire of seeing thee so gloriously crowned, that it may never die within us until it shall be changed into the happy fruition of thy blessed sight. Amen.

Salve Regina, etc., as before.

CONSECRATION TO OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY.

(To be Renewed Once a Week.)

Permit me, O immaculate Virgin, Queen of the holy Rosary, to choose thee this day for my mother, my patroness, my asylum, my refuge, and my protection. I wish to give thee my heart, my soul, my entire being, and, after God, to love thee above all things. Happy he who consecrates to thee his love. Art thou not, O Blessed Virgin, fairer than the angels, brighter than the stars, more brilliant than the sun? Art thou not

a garden of delights? Dost thou not surpass the lily in splendor? Art thou not a perfumed flower, a fair dove, the beloved of Jesus, the cherished daughter, the mother without spot, the spouse chosen among a thousand? Who, then, can refuse thee his heart? I give thee, then, mine, because thou art fair, enriched with every grace, and filled with every perfection. I give thee, then, mine, O Mary, because gratitude urges me to it. O beloved Mother! deign to permit me to ask thee three things: First, a pure heart to love thee and to love Jesus; second, that I may die on a day that will be consecrated to thee, and in pronouncing perfect acts of love; third, the grace to be among the privileged choir who in heaven, at the foot of thy throne, will sing thy praises forever.

O Mother of God and my most dear Mother, by the Heart of Jesus I beg of thee each time I shall say "O Mother of God, remember me!" to adore then for me the Heart of thy divine Son, and offer my unworthy one to him, asking pardon for all that is amiss in it—telling that God of love how much it desires perfectly to love him; and obtain by thy powerful intercession a love that may consume in it all earthly affections, and that he may replenish it to the full extent of its small capacity.

This, dear Mother, I beg through the Heart of Jesus, to which I am sure thou canst refuse nothing, and by which I know thou canst not be rejected. Oh! show, then, thyself a mother, and comply with the desires of thy poor, unworthy child.

EASY AND SHORT METHOD OF SAYING THE ROSARY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN WITH THE MYSTERIES.

Taking your beads in your right hand, by the medal or cross, bless yourself and say "In the name of the Father," etc. Then recite, by way of introduction, the "Creed," one "Our Father," three "Hail Marys," and one "Glory be to the Father." Express the mysteries appropriate to each decade in the middle of each "Hail Mary" immediately after the name of Jesus.

Mysteries that are to be said, or at least meditated upon, whilst reciting the prayers:

I. The Joyful Mysteries, *for Mondays, Thursdays, and for Advent till the octave of the Epiphany inclusively.*

1. Whom, O Virgin, thou didst conceive at the message of an angel.
2. Whom thou didst carry in thy womb on thy visit to Elizabeth.
3. Who was born of thee at Bethlehem.
4. Whom thou didst present in the Temple.
5. Whom thou didst find in the Temple.

II. The Sorrowful Mysteries, *for Tuesdays, Fridays, and for Lent.*

1. Who sweat blood for us in the Garden.
2. Who was scourged for us.
3. Who was crowned with thorns for us.
4. Who carried his cross for us.
5. Who was crucified for us.

III. The Glorious Mysteries, *for Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and the whole Paschal time.*

1. Who arose from the dead.
2. Who ascended into heaven.
3. Who sent the Holy Ghost.
4. Who took thee up into heaven.
5. Who crowned thee Queen of heaven.

THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION.

(November 21st.)

HISTORICAL EXPLANATION.

This feast was celebrated in the Eastern Church long before it was introduced into the Western. The Emperor Emanuel Comnenus introduced it into the Greek Church as a general feast. The Ambassador of Charles V., king of France, urged

its celebration in the Western Church also. King Charles presented the matter to Pope Gregory XI., who was then living in Avignon, and the Pope had the feast celebrated, for the first time, in his own chapel in the year 1372. It spread over all France, and in 1460 Duke William of Saxony asked for its extension to his country, which was granted by Pope Pius II. and also by Pope Paul II.

Finally Sixtus V. in the year 1585 ordered it to be celebrated by the whole Church.

NOVENA FOR THE FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF MARY.

(Novena begins November 12th and ends November 20th.)

Recite daily nine times the "Hail Mary"; then say the following prayer:

O beloved Mother of God, most amiable child Mary, thou didst present thyself in the Temple, and with promptitude and without reserve didst consecrate thyself to the glory and love of God; could I but offer thee this day the first years of my life, to devote myself without reserve to thy service, my holy and most sweet Lady! But it is now too late to do this; for, unfortunate creature that I am, I have lost many years in the service of the world and my own caprices, and have

lived in almost entire forgetfulness of thee and of God. "Woe to that time in which I did not love thee!" But it is better to begin late than not at all. Behold, O Mary, I this day present myself to thee, and I offer myself without reserve to thy service for the long or short time that I still have to live in this world; and, in union with thee, I renounce all creatures, and devote myself entirely to the love of my Creator. I consecrate my mind to thee, O Queen, that it may always dwell on the love that thou deservest; my tongue, that it may praise thee; my heart, that it may love thee. Do thou accept, O most holy Virgin! the offering which this miserable sinner now makes thee; accept it, I beseech thee, by the consolation that thy heart experienced when thou didst give thyself to God in the Temple. But, since I enter thy service late, it is reasonable that I should redouble my acts of homage and love, thereby to compensate for lost time. Do thou help my weakness with thy powerful intercession, O Mother of mercy! by obtaining me perseverance from thy Jesus and strength to be always faithful to thee until death, that, thus always serving thee in life, I may praise thee in paradise for all eternity. Amen.

For making a novena in honor of the presentation of Our Lady in the Temple an indulgence is granted

of three hundred days each day, and a plenary indulgence during the course of the novena or on one of the eight days immediately following it.—Pius IX., Jan. 5, 1849, and Jan. 28, 1850.

MEDITATION FOR THE FEAST.

I.

The holy child Mary had hardly attained the age of three years when she entreated her holy parents to take her to the Temple, according to the promise which they had made. The appointed day having arrived, the immaculate young Virgin left Nazareth with St. Joachim and St. Anne; a choir of angels also accompanied that holy child, who was destined to become the Mother of their Creator. "Go," says St. Germanus, "go, O Blessed Virgin, to the house of the Lord, to await the coming of the Holy Ghost, who will make thee the Mother of the Eternal Word."

II.

When the holy company had reached the Temple of Jerusalem, the blessed child turned to her parents, and kneeling, kissed their hands, asked their blessing, and, without looking back, ascended the steps of the Temple, and renouncing all earthly things, and all that the world could give her, she offered and consecrated herself with-

out reserve to God. The life of Mary in the Temple was thenceforward but one continual exercise of love and offering of her whole self to her Lord. She advanced from hour to hour, nay, even from moment to moment, in all virtues, fortified, it is true, by divine grace, but always exerting herself with her whole strength to correspond to this grace. Mary herself said, in a vision to St. Elizabeth of Hungary, "Thou thinkest, perhaps, that I obtained grace and virtues without effort. Know that I received no graces from God without great labor, constant prayer, ardent desires, and many tears and mortifications."

III.

Thus in the Temple the tender Virgin Mary prayed without ceasing. And seeing that the human race was lost and hateful to God, she principally prayed for the coming of the Messias, and ardently desired to be the servant of the happy virgin who was to become the Mother of God. But, O holy Lady, know that on account of thy prayers the Son of God hastens his coming into the world to redeem the world; and moreover know that thou art that blessed one who art chosen to be the Mother of thy Creator.

Example.

Father Joseph Jorio, the devout author of a book in praise of the Rosary called "The Secret of Every Grace," relates that St. Vincent Ferrer said to a man who was dying in despair, "Why are you determined to lose your soul, when Jesus Christ wishes to save you?" The man answered that, in spite of Christ, he was determined to go to hell. The saint replied, "And you, in spite of yourself, shall be saved." He began with the persons in the house to recite the Rosary, when, behold! the sick man asked to make his confession, and having done so, with many tears, expired.

The same author relates that in a late earthquake a poor woman was buried under the ruins of a house which was overthrown. A priest had the stones and rubbish cleared away, and under them found the mother with her children in her arms, alive and uninjured. On being asked what devotion she had practised, she replied that she had never omitted saying the Rosary and visiting the altar of our blessed Lady.

He also relates that another woman lived in sin, fancying it was the only means by which she could gain her livelihood. She was advised to recommend herself to Mary by saying the Rosary. She did so; and behold one night the divine Mother appeared to her and said, "Abandon sin; and as to thy support, trust in me, I will provide for that." In the morning she went to confession, changed her life, and the Most Blessed Virgin amply supplied her wants.

Prayer.

O beloved of God, most holy child, thou prayest for all: pray also for me. Thou didst consecrate thy

entire self from thy very childhood to the love of thy God: obtain that I, during the time that I have yet to be on earth, may live for God alone. On this day, in union with thee, I renounce all creatures, and consecrate myself to the love of my Lord. I also offer myself to thee, my Queen, to serve thee always. Accept me as thy servant in an especial manner, and obtain me the grace to be always faithful to thee and to thy Son, that I may one day praise thee, and love thee for all eternity in heaven.

DEVOTIONS FOR THE MONTH OF MAY.

INTRODUCTION.

The faithful praise Mary three times daily in the Angelus. Not satisfied with this, Christian piety has dedicated a special day of the week to her, Saturday, while holy Church has ordered some feast in her honor in nearly every month of the year, for Mary, after God, is worthy of being the most beloved object of the human heart.

But all this was not sufficient for the ardor of her devout servants. A whole month, the month of May, has been dedicated to her honor.

In this month nature is at its loveliest, and in the beauty of her renewal invites the mind of man to a spiritual renewal. "It is not without a particular design of God," says St. Gregory,

"that the celebration of the Ascension of Our Lord is in the springtime. Is there one whose heart in these days, when the Creator of the world presents himself as the conqueror of death and the subduer of hell, and all nature wakes from the grave and glows in youthful joy and strength, is not attracted irresistibly to the heavenly life?"

Inspired by the same sentiment Christian devotion has dedicated the loveliest month of spring to the Mother of God. The Blessed Henry Suso, who died January 25, 1365, kept a spiritual May, renewing his spiritual life by godly practices. St. Philip Neri, who died 1595, urged the keeping of the month by spiritual practices and by temporal works of mercy.

Pope Pius VII., by a rescript of March 21, 1815, solemnly sanctioned the devotion of the Month of May and encouraged it by enriching this devotion with many indulgences. To all faithful who, in church or at home, honor the Blessed Virgin by prayers and other virtuous practices, he grants three hundred days' indulgence and a plenary indulgence on the day on which they receive the sacraments and pray for the needs of the Church and the intention of the Holy Pontiff. These indulgences can also be devoted to the souls in purgatory.

THE MANNER IN WHICH WE SHOULD PRACTICE THE MAY DEVOTIONS.

1. By receiving the sacraments during the month.

2. By offering up all our actions daily to the Blessed Virgin and through her to her Blessed Son.

3. By attending Mass every day if possible.

4. By striving during this month in particular to root out an evil habit and acquire the virtue which is especially necessary to us. As, for instance, patience, chastity, and so on, and ask the intercession of the Blessed Virgin for this purpose.

5. By reading one of the following meditations compiled from the writings of St. Alphonsus Liguori or St. Teresa every day. It may be preceded by the prayer of St. Augustine and followed by the prayer of St. Alphonsus as given for the first day, adding the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary," the Litany and the Rosary, as may be the individual preference. Or one may read from some other devout book and follow the spiritual reading with other prayers, according to special choice, but it is well to include the Rosary, whatever else may be recited.

First Day.

PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE.

O Blessed Virgin Mary, who can duly thank thee, or herald forth thy praises, who, by the assent of thy single will, didst rescue a fallen world? What honor can be paid to thee by our weak human nature, which by thy intervention alone hath found the way to return to grace and life? Accept, then, such poor thanks as we have here to offer, unequal to thy merits though they be; and, accepting our good desires, obtain by thy prayers the remission of our offences. Graciously hear our prayers, and obtain for us the remedy of reconciliation. May the offering we make to God through thee be acceptable in his sight; and may that be granted which we ask with trustful heart. Accept our offerings, grant us our petitions, banish our fears, for thou art the sole hope of sinners. Through thee we hope for forgiveness of our sins; and in thee, most blessed Lady, is the hope of our reward. Holy Mary, succor the wretched, help the faint-hearted, comfort the sorrowful, pray for the people, shield the clergy, intercede for holy women; let all who celebrate thy holy commemoration feel thy protection. Be thou at hand, ready to aid our prayers and obtain for us what we desire. Make it thy care, Blessed

Lady, to intercede ever for the people of God—thou who didst deserve to bear the Redeemer of the world, who liveth and reigneth forever and ever. Amen.

ON THE MEANS OF PERFECTION.

Perfection consists in the practice of two things—detachment from creatures and union with God. This is expressly taught us by Jesus Christ in these words: *If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* (Matt. xvi. 24.)

As regards detachment from creatures, St. John says: *Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world . . . For all that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life.* (I. John ii. 16.) So that all our imperfections arise from three kinds of inordinate love: the love of pleasure, the love of possessions, and the love of self-esteem. Upon these St. Teresa beautifully remarks: "It is just that he who adheres to things that are lost should himself be lost." On union with God, the same saint tells us that true union is the union of our will with the will of God.

PRAYER OF ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI.

Most holy immaculate Virgin and my Mother Mary, to thee who art the Mother of my Lord,

the Queen of the world, the advocate, the hope, the refuge of sinners, I have recourse to-day—I, who am the most miserable of all. I render thee my most humble homage, O great Queen, and I thank thee for all the graces thou hast conferred on me until now, particularly for having delivered me from hell, which I have so often deserved. I love thee, O most amiable Lady; and for the love which I bear thee, I promise to serve thee always, and to do all in my power to make others love thee also. I place in thee all my hopes; I confide my salvation to thy care. Accept me for thy servant, and receive me under thy mantle, O Mother of mercy. And since thou art so powerful with God, deliver me from all temptations, or rather obtain me the strength to triumph over them until death. Of thee I ask a perfect love for Jesus Christ. From thee I hope to die a good death. O my Mother, by the love which thou bearest to God, I beseech thee to help me at all times, but especially at the last moment of my life. Leave me not, I beseech thee, until thou seest me safe in heaven, blessing thee, and singing thy mercies for all eternity. Amen. So I hope. So may it be.

(Three hundred days' indulgence each time.)

Second Day.

on the love of pleasure.

The love of pleasure or self-gratification is to be overcome by detaching the heart from such things by means of internal and external mortification.

By *internal* mortification is meant the regulation of the passions—the never doing of anything from self-love, vanity, caprice, or human motives, but solely to please God. We are apt to complain that, seeking God, we do not find him. "Detach your heart from all things," St. Teresa says. "Seek God, and you will find him." Otherwise the things we love will be continually drawing us off, and will prevent us from finding God.

External mortification consists in detaching ourselves from the pleasures of the senses by mortifying them.

St. Teresa has left us, on the subject of external mortification, the following excellent sentiments: "To suppose that God admits to his friendship those who are ever seeking their own ease and comfort is absurd. The spirit of delicacy and ease corresponds not to the spirit of prayer. Souls that really love God cannot seek for repose."

Third Day.

on the interior passions.

The interior passions are of two kinds, the irascible and the concupiscible.

Of the *irascible* the principal is the passion of anger, which is to be overcome by the virtue of meekness, and this is to be exercised. Of the *concupiscible,* is all inordinate love for all sorts of persons, which is to be overcome by avoiding their conversation, affectionate expressions or letters, presents, jests, and everything else that is likely to excite the affections. St. Teresa says: "Cease to expose yourself to evil occasions, and the soul will immediately return to love God."

"Let your desire be to see God; your fear, to lose him; your joy, whatever can conduct you to him."

Fourth Day.

on anger.

The passion of anger is to be overcome:

1. By never being angry with another.
2. By conversing with all with equal mildness.
3. By speaking in a subdued tone of voice, with a cheerful air and mild words, particularly with irritable and troublesome persons.

4. By quietly bearing with the defects, injuries, and annoyances of others.

5. By not being disturbed nor disheartened on account of our own defects, but by humbling ourselves, by calmly rising from them with an act of repentance and, thinking no more of the past, pursuing our career with greater fervor and greater confidence in God; and by doing this whenever we fall.

6. By never speaking nor acting when the heart is disturbed. St. Francis de Sales says: "I have made a league with my tongue never to speak when my heart is disturbed."

Fifth Day.

on the love of persons.

In our relations with persons we should always endeavor to please God rather than them, because they in general love their own interests more than our advantage. We should never relinquish the practice of necessary virtues to suit their views. If they are relations and God calls us to a state of life of greater perfection, we should courageously leave them, obeying God rather than them. We should never involve ourselves in family affairs hurtful to us, unless obliged to do so by charity. We should consider in all things that the nearer persons are to us the greater be-

comes our responsibility of example and of charity towards them. St. Teresa says: "Because we do not interiorly give all our affection to God, so neither does God give us all the treasure of his love."

Sixth Day.

on self-will.

Self-will belongs also to the concupiscible, which is to be overcome by obedience. "Obedience," says St. Teresa, "is the short way to perfection;" and she adds: "O virtue of obedience, which canst do all things!" In like manner St. Catharine of Bologna said that obedience alone is more pleasing to God than all other good works. In practice, then, we must:

1. Regulate ourselves in all things regarding the soul, however trivial they may be, by a complete surrender of our will to the will of God, by remembering that the station in life, the crosses and the mortifications which he chooses for us are far more useful for our salvation than any we can choose for ourselves, however good they may seem to us.

St. Teresa says: "God requires nothing more of a soul resolved to love him but obedience."

2. We must obey our superiors in all things in which it is not evident that there is sin.

3. We must obey willingly, and not with sourness.

Blessed Clement, of the order of St. Francis, one morning delayed going to the common table, that he might finish certain accustomed devotions to the Blessed Virgin; but she spoke to him from the image, and desired him to go with the others, as she was more pleased with obedience than with all other devotions.

Seventh Day.

on patience.

Self-will may further be overcome by being patient and rejoicing before God at being repressed, calumniated, or persecuted. St. Teresa said: "Who is he that, seeing Our Lord covered with wounds and afflicted with persecutions, does not embrace or desire them?" On this head the saints have frequently sought from God the grace of being persecuted for his sake. It is well, at least in meditation, to prepare ourselves to bear with oppression and exactions by anticipating whatever occasions may present themselves. Moreover, it is well to make no excuse or defence even when wrongly blamed, unless in case of scandal, or hindrance of the greater glory of God. St. Teresa said: "Once not to excuse one's self

advances the soul towards perfection more than many sermons."

Eighth Day.

on external mortification.

The senses may be mortified:

1. The sight, by not looking on illicit, dangerous, or curious objects; by walking with the eyes cast down; by observing modesty with ourselves in dressing or undressing, and in every other action.

2. The hearing, by not listening to murmurs, immodesty, or news.

3. The smell, by depriving ourselves of scented waters, perfumes, and other like luxuries.

4. The taste, as regards the *quantity* of food: First, by not eating or drinking solely for the sake of gratification nor to satisfy the appetite, but only to afford sufficient support to nature; secondly, by always renouncing something at table for the love of God. As regards the *quality* of food: First, by not seeking for nice and delicate things, nor highly seasoned sauces and the like; secondly, by not complaining when our food is ill-done, cold, or insipid.

5. The touch is to be mortified by not seeking too much ease in bedding, clothing, or furniture; by at least not complaining in sickness, fatigue,

inconveniences, or interior trials, but offering them all to Jesus Christ.

Ninth Day.

on restraining the tongue.

The restraining of the tongue by silence belongs also to external mortification, which can be exercised:

1. By speaking little and with consideration.

2. By not speaking at all, at times, unless from necessity.

3. By speaking frequently with God, and by introducing something spiritual into our discourses. St. Teresa said: "In the conversations of the servants of God, Jesus is always present, and is much pleased that they should delight in him."

4. By not speaking to every one of our trials and temptations. St. Teresa says: "Do not communicate your temptations to imperfect souls, for you will do an injury both to them and to yourself. Communicate them only to the perfect."

5. By avoiding gossip and all unkind or idle speech.

Tenth Day.

love of possessions.

The second kind of inordinate love is the love of possessions, and this is to be overcome by poverty:

1. By dispensing with what is superfluous and retaining only what is necessary, or, at least, by renouncing all undue attachment to what is possessed.

2. By choosing the meanest things.

3. By rejoicing when even that which is necessary is wanting. St. Teresa said: "Poverty is a good that comprises all the goods of the world." And in another place: "The less we have here the more shall we enjoy in eternity."

Eleventh Day.

on striving for spiritual treasures.

A great servant of God, Father Hyppolito Durazzo, of the Society of Jesus, used with good reason to say, as we read in his life, that men of the world never think that they have enough of the good things of this life, and are always endeavoring to possess more; but with respect to the rest they say: "The smallest corner of paradise is sufficient for us." Whereas, on the contrary, he who truly loves God and not the world,

ought to be contented with the least corner of the earth; but for the good things of heaven he ought always to be striving more and more without ever resting satisfied. This good Father used also to say "that to become a saint one need desire nothing but what is to be obtained through the sole desire to be pleasing to God."

Twelfth Day.

On Charity towards our Neighbor.

In order to overcome further the love of possessions and promote the union of the soul with God, we must exercise charity towards our neighbor.

As regards the *interior*, it consists in wishing him the same good that we wish ourselves; in not wishing him the evil we wish not for ourselves; in rejoicing in his good, and lamenting the evil which befalls him; although we may naturally experience some repugnance in so doing.

We must above all endeavor to render good for evil, at least to speak well of those who injure us, treat them with meekness and recommend them to God, turning away our thoughts from the annoyances, harshness, and provocations which we seem to have received from them.

Thirteenth Day.

on exterior charity.

As regards the *exterior* towards our neighbor we must:

1. Not murmur against him, deride or laugh at him, but speak always well of him and defend, or at least excuse, his intention.

2. We must console him under afflictions.

3. We must succor him in his necessities of soul and body, particularly in sickness.

4. We must condescend to our neighbor in all that is not sin. Hence as St. Francis de Sales admonishes, we must choose a proper time for our neighbor and for ourselves; and when we have been wanting in our behavior towards him, we ought to seek an occasion of meeting his wishes.

5. We must not give our neighbor bad counsel or bad example.

6. We must occasionally reprove him, but mildly and seasonably, and not when he is agitated with passion.

Fourteenth Day.

love of self-esteem.

The third kind of inordinate love is the love of self-esteem, and this is to be overcome by humility, which is to be exercised:

1. By giving all glory to God in whatever good we do, and expelling from our hearts all vain complacency.

St. Teresa said: "When we intend to please God alone, he will enable us to overcome all vainglory."

2. By esteeming ourselves as being worse than all, and all others as being better than ourselves, ever regarding that which is good in others, and in ourselves whatever is defective, reflecting particularly on the many graces which we have received from God.

3. By desiring to be thus estimated and treated by others.

4. By not seeking honors, praise, nor posts of honor, and by not accepting of them unless obliged to do so by obedience to superiors.

5. By never saying a word without necessity in praise of ourselves, our talents, birth, parents, riches, etc.

Fifteenth Day.

on humbly receiving contempt.

All wish to be humble, but there are few that wish to be humbled. St. Ignatius of Loyola gave the following counsel to St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi: "Humility is the joy that we feel at everything that leads us to despise ourselves." This

is what is meant by being humble of heart, as Jesus Christ teaches us to be; namely, to regard ourselves as we really are, and to wish that others may look upon us and treat us in the same way. We must not expect that the senses and the inferior part of the soul should find satisfaction in this; but we must act by reason, contenting ourselves with pleasing God; and for this it is especially useful to exercise ourselves during prayer in preparing for receiving contempt of every description, and to pray earnestly to Jesus and Mary to grant us the fulfilment of our good resolutions on the occasions that may present themselves.

Sixteenth Day.

on the practice of humility.

Behold for the practice of humility the following most important maxims, according to St. Teresa:

1. To avoid every occupation and every conversation that can in any way have to do with self-love, unless some notable utility oblige us to enter upon it. The saint enjoins, nevertheless, that we should never put ourselves forward, excepting under obedience or from motives of charity.

2. Never to manifest our interior devotion, unless through some great necessity; and never to

affect outwardly a devotion that is not within the heart.

3. To rejoice on beholding ourselves the objects of complaints, of insults, and of mockeries, without seeking to justify ourselves, unless this be necessary for some greater good; "and when we are reproved," says the saint, "let us receive the reproof with interior as well as exterior humility, offering up a prayer to God for him by whom we are reprimanded."

Seventeenth Day.

on true love of god.

The Lord one day addressed St. Teresa as follows, in order to make her understand that true love of God in this life does not consist in any sensible sweetnesses, but in the accomplishment of the will of God, and in the undergoing of sufferings with calmness.

"Thinkest thou, my daughter," he said to her, "that gratifications constitute merit? No, merit consists in acting, in suffering, and in loving. Consider my life, altogether filled up, as it was, with sufferings: when you look at my Mother holding me in her arms, do not suppose that she enjoys this satisfaction without suffering the cruel torment that St. Simeon had predicted to her, when he said to her: 'A sword shall pierce

thine own soul'; my Father having from that time enlightened her in order that she might understand all that I was to suffer."

Eighteenth Day.

on suffering.

"To suppose that my Father admits any one into friendship with himself without sufferings is folly," Our Lord said to St. Teresa, "for those for whom he entertains a great love he leads on by the way of sufferings, and these sufferings are the greater in proportion to the greatness of his love."

If, then, it is our wish to love our dearest Lord with a genuine love, and to study how to give satisfaction to his heart rather than to gratify our own, we must consider that the least one can do is to conform one's self perfectly to the will of God in all adversities. "The weight of the cross makes itself felt by him that drags it along, but not by him that embraces it." Just as a miser, instead of being fatigued, feels joy as he carries his weight of gold, and rejoices the more in proportion to the greatness of its weight, so does a loving soul rejoice the more the more she has to suffer for God, because she perceives that in offering up her sufferings to her Beloved, she is exceedingly acceptable to him.

Nineteenth Day.

remembrance of god's presence.

It is very conducive to union with God to keep up a continual remembrance of his presence by reminding ourselves that in every place he sees us, perceives us, surrounds us, and is in us. St. Teresa attributes all our defects to a neglect of this practice; she says: "They all arise from not attending to the presence of God, as though we believed him to be afar off." But this happens because we have but little love for him: "The true lover," observes the saint, "is ever mindful of the object of his love."

To keep up a remembrance of the divine presence, it is a great help to carry about us some special token of it, or to place such a token in our room or on our table.

Let this remembrance be always accompanied by pious ejaculations, acts of love, or offerings of ourselves to God.

Twentieth Day.

on spiritual communion.

Frequent spiritual communions are of great assistance in maintaining a union with God. St. Teresa says: "To make spiritual communions is very profitable; do not neglect them, because by

them you will prove to Our Lord how much you love him."

Make also frequent visits to the most holy Sacrament. "What," says the saint, "would become of us if we had not the most holy Sacrament?" St. Dionysius the Areopagite asserts that from no other source do so many helps to perfection flow to us as from the most holy Sacrament. St. Teresa also says: "Let us act so as not to be at a distance from our Shepherd, nor lose him from our sight: because the sheep that keep near their shepherd are always more caressed and better taken care of than others."

Twenty-first Day.

on holy communion.

We must receive, as often as possible, but with the advice of a director, holy Communion, which is called the sacrament of union, inasmuch as in it the soul is wholly united with Jesus Christ. But care must be taken to prepare for it by directing all our spiritual exercises to that end. At least half an hour should be spent in affections and prayers of thanksgiving after Communion. St. Teresa says that while Jesus Christ remains in the soul, he is, as it were, on the throne of mercy to dispense his graces. Her words are these: "After Communion, let us not lose so fa-

vorable an opportunity of treating with him." And in another place: "His divine Majesty is not accustomed to pay ill for his abode when he meets with a good reception." For preparation and thanksgiving three points should be particularly dwelt upon: 1. Who is it that is coming? Jesus. 2. To whom is he coming? To me. 3. Why is he coming? To be loved. To these should be united three acts: of faith, of humility, and love.

Twenty-second Day.

on faith in the blessed sacrament.

The mystery of faith is preëminently the most holy Sacrament. St. Teresa used to say that God has conferred upon us a greater grace in giving us the Holy Eucharist than in becoming man. When the saint heard any one say that he would wish to have lived at the time when Jesus was upon earth, she used to laugh and say: "And what more do we want, having Jesus, as we have, in the most holy Sacrament? Surely, if it was enough, while he was upon earth, to touch his raiment in order to be healed of infirmities, what will he not do for us when he is within us? Oh, how sweet it is," she wrote, "to see the Shepherd become a Lamb. He is a Shepherd, because he gives food. He is a Lamb, because he is himself

the food. . . . When, therefore, we pray to him for our daily bread, we are asking of him that the Shepherd may be our food and sustenance." Let the fruit of this consideration be that of continual thanksgiving, in union with the Blessed Virgin Mary, to the Lord, for having bestowed upon us the great gift of faith in the most holy Sacrament, by making us children of the holy Church, from which so many millions of souls, perhaps less guilty than ourselves, in the sight of divine justice, remain separated.

Twenty-third Day.

on an active love of god.

We must love him with our whole heart, ever desiring to arrive at a higher degree of perfection in order to please him; upon this St. Teresa observes: "God will not suffer any good desire to go unrewarded even in this life." And she also says that Our Lord, "ordinarily, does not confer many signal favors, except upon those who have greatly desired to love him." But to desires we must add actions, by overcoming with fortitude human respect, our own repugnance, and all worldly interest. "The love of God does not consist in tender devotion, but in serving him with fortitude and humility."

Twenty-fourth Day.

PRAYER.

To keep ourselves in union with God, it is absolutely necessary to attend to prayer, inasmuch as we know from the Gospel that God in general dispenses his graces to those only who seek them.

Hence when we rise in the morning we should confidently recommend ourselves to Jesus and Mary, that they may assist us.

It is advisable to do this also in the beginning of all our actions; and never to omit making in the evening an examination of conscience, with acts of repentance and sorrow.

In time of temptations, and when we are in danger of committing sin, it is absolutely necessary to have recourse to God, saying at least: Jesus, Mary.

St. Francis de Sales used to say that, next after the merits of Jesus Christ, the protection of Mary is so powerful and so beneficial to the soul "that, according to my judgment, I look upon it to be the firmest support we can have with God." It is also very necessary to beg of God to grant us the victory over our predominant passion, holy perseverance, his love, and perfect conformity to his blessed will.

Twenty-fifth Day.

on the exclusive love of god.

The Roman Senate, as St. Augustine relates, sanctioned the payment of divine honors to thirty thousand deities, that is, to all that were recognized as such in the world; but it refused to decree divine worship to the God of the Christians, whom it styled a jealous God, since he desired to be adored exclusively. And the Roman Senate had good reason for what they thus alleged; not because our God is proud, but because he is the true God. The thief is satisfied if he obtains a share, but the owner is not satisfied without the whole. God desires, then, to be the sole possessor of our heart; and therefore he enjoins upon each of us this command: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.* Let us, then, set to work to detach our heart from riches by the love of holy poverty; from pleasures, by mortification; from honors, by humility; from relatives, by detachment; and, lastly, from self-will by obedience to superiors; frequently offering up to God that excellent prayer: *Create in me, O my God! a pure heart.* (Ps. i. 12.)

Twenty-sixth Day.

on a desire for sanctity.

A great *desire* for sanctity is one means towards becoming a saint; for, on the one hand, God does not bestow the abundance of his graces except on those souls that hunger for them, as the most holy Mary says, in her sublime canticle: *He has filled with good things those who are hungry.* (Luke i. 53.) And, on the other hand, this desire is necessary as regards ourselves, to the end that we may have the power of persevering under the hardships that we must endure if we would gain the great treasure of perfection. For that which is but little desired men make but little exertions to obtain; whereas, on the contrary, to compass the acquisition of what is much desired, there is no toil, however arduous, that they do not find to be easy and sweet. On this account it is that God gives the appellation of "blessed" to those that have not the desire merely, but a hunger besides, that is, an ardent desire for sanctity: *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice.* (Matt. v. 6.)

Twenty-seventh Day.

on resolution.

In order to arrive at perfection, it is not enough to have merely the *desire* for it; we must

also make the firm *resolution* of attaining it; otherwise the desire without the resolution will be of no avail. This is what happens to such a number of souls that are always desiring, and are perpetually multiplying their desires, but that never come to a determination of setting themselves to the work in earnest, and so remain ever in their tepidity without making any progress. "I would rather have," writes St. Teresa on this subject, "a short prayer producing great results, than a prayer lasting several years, during which the soul never resolves on performing anything of any real value for God."

St. Bernard says that many fail to become saints because they lack the courage. "I have experienced in a variety of circumstances," St. Teresa adds, "that when any one from the outset resolves courageously on the accomplishment of anything, whatever may be its difficulties, if he does it in order to please God, he has nothing to fear."

Twenty-eighth Day.

on confidence.

The mercies of God are commensurate with the confidence that a soul places in him; so that when the Lord wishes to enrich a soul with graces he first of all enriches it with confidence.

So great was the confidence with which the holy mother Teresa was gifted by God, that whenever the strength of the opposition increased, her courage would increase also, and she would say that this is a sign that the seed sown will produce the more abundant fruit; and so all turned out successfully. We thus read in her writings: "Thus I hope, because the true way of escaping a fall is to attach one's self to the cross, and to confide in him who has been suspended thereon. I find him alone a true friend; so overpowered am I with a sense of this, that it seems to me that, with the grace of God, I could withstand the whole universe contending against me."

Learn from this, O devout soul! how God listens to the prayers that are offered with confidence; ask, then, with confidence, and you shall have whatever you desire. Heaven and earth may fail you, but the word of God, who has said, *Whosoever asketh, receiveth* (Matt. vii. 8), cannot fail.

Twenty-ninth Day.

on the continual service of god.

We must love God continually, and on all occasions; and for this end we must direct and offer all to him, even our indifferent actions, such as

our eating, diversions, walking, breathing, uniting all with the actions of Jesus Christ and of the Blessed Virgin when on earth. Moreover, we must cheerfully suffer all adverse and painful things, conforming ourselves and uniting ourselves to the will of God in whatever he is pleased to do in us and for us. Upon this St. Teresa has left the following excellent sentiments: "And what more can we wish to gain than the testimony of doing what is pleasing to God?" And she explains what this testimony is: "Whilst we live, our gain does not consist in endeavoring to enjoy God, but in doing his will. Great is the efficacy of this giving of our will to God, for it induces him to unite himself to our lowliness. True union is the union of our will with the will of God."

Thirtieth Day.

On a yearning for paradise.

Let us yearn after paradise, where we shall offend God no more, and where we shall ever love him with all our powers. When the troubles of this life press heavily upon us, let us animate ourselves by the hope of paradise to bear them with tranquillity. When the world or the devil presents for our acceptance fruits that are forbidden, let us with good courage turn our back

upon them and lift up our eyes to paradise. If the dread of God's judgments alarm us, let us nerve ourselves by hoping in the goodness of our God, who, to make us understand how ardently he desires to give paradise to us, has commanded us, under pain of damnation, to hope for it through his mercy. He has even willed to purchase it at the cost of his blood, and of his death, that so he might obtain that great blessedness for us; and to assure us of it the more, he has been pleased to give us a pledge of it in the gift of himself to us in the most holy Sacrament of the altar.

Thirty-first Day.

on a happy death.

If the worldly-minded have a fear of losing their good things, fleeting and miserable as they are, much greater is the fear that the saints have of losing God, who is good, infinite, and eternal, and who promises to bestow himself in heaven as a recompense upon him that has loved him on earth, admitting him to the enjoyment of his beauty and of his own happiness. Hence as their whole fear during life has been simply that of sinning, and thus of losing the friendship of that Lord whom they have loved so well, so their whole desire has been to die in the grace of God,

and by death to gain the assurance of loving and possessing him forever.

Death, then—that object of the greatest terror to souls attached to the earth—is what those that love God especially desire; for, says St. Bernard, it is for these happy souls both the termination of their labors and the gate of life. Hence we see that, among the saints, one would call this life a prison and pray the Lord to deliver him out of it: *Deliver my soul from this prison.* Another, like St. Paul, would call it a real death: *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?*

VARIOUS PRAYERS TO MARY.

DEDICATION OF ONE'S SELF TO MARY.

Most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, I, N., although most unworthy to be thy servant, yet moved by thy wonderful compassion and by my desire to serve thee, now choose thee, in presence of my guardian angel and of the whole celestial court, for my special Lady, Advocate, and Mother: and I firmly purpose always to love and serve thee for the future, and to do whatever I can to induce others to love and serve thee also. I beseech thee, O Mother of God, and my most compassionate and loving Mother, by the blood which thy Son shed for me, to receive me into

the number of thy servants, to be thy child and servant forever. Assist me in all my thoughts, words, and actions in every moment of my life, so that every step that I take, and every breath that I draw, may be directed to the greater glory of my God; and through thy most powerful intercession may I never more offend my beloved Jesus, but may I glorify him, and love him in this life, and love thee, my most beloved and dear Mother, and thus love thee and enjoy thee in heaven for all eternity. Amen.

My Mother Mary, I recommend my soul to thee, and especially at the hour of my death.

OFFERING OF A FAMILY TO MARY.

Most blessed Virgin, our immaculate Queen and Mother, refuge and consolation of the distressed, prostrate before thy throne with all my family, I choose thee as my patroness, my Mother, and my advocate with God. I consecrate myself forever, with all that belongs to me, to thy service, and I pray thee, O Mother of God, to receive us into the number of thy servants, taking us into thy protection, succoring us during life and above all at the hour of death. Bless me, with all my family, and permit not that anything in us should ever offend thy Son. Protect us in all temptations, deliver us from all dangers, provide

for all our wants, counsel us in all our doubts, console us in all our afflictions, assist us in our sickness, and especially in the agonies of death. Permit not the wicked one to boast of having under his dominion any of us who are now consecrated to thee; but grant that we may go to heaven to thank thee, and together with thee to praise and love Jesus our Redeemer for all eternity. Amen. Thus may it be.

THE MEMORARE.

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, and sought thy intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee I come; before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VII., by a rescript, June 21, 1808, granted an indulgence of three hundred days, once a day, to all the faithful who with at least contrite heart and devotion shall say, on the days assigned, together with the "Hail Mary" three times, these prayers, to make some reparation for the

many blasphemies uttered against her not only by unbelievers, but also by bad Christians. A plenary indulgence, once a month, to all who having said these prayers every day for a month, as directed above, if being truly penitent, after confession and Communion, they pray to God for holy Church. These indulgences, both plenary and partial, were confirmed forever by his Holiness Pope Pius IX., by a rescript June 18, 1876.

Sunday.

TO OBTAIN THE FORGIVENESS OF OUR SINS.

Behold, O Mother of God, at thy feet a miserable sinner, a slave of hell, who has recourse to thee and trusts in thee. I do not deserve that thou shouldst even look at me; but I know that thou, having seen thy Son die for the salvation of sinners, hast the greatest desire to help them. I hear all call thee the Refuge of sinners, the hope of those who are in despair, and the help of the abandoned. Help me, for the love of Jesus Christ; extend thy hand to a miserable creature who has fallen and recommends himself to thee. I know that thy pleasure is to help a sinner to thy utmost; help me, therefore, now that thou canst do so. By my sins I have lost divine grace, and with it my soul; I now place myself in thy hands. Tell me what I must do to recover the favor of my Lord, and I will immediately do it. He sends me to thee that thou mayest help me;

and he wills that I should have recourse to thy mercy, that not only the merits of thy Son, but also that thy intercession may help me to save my soul. To thee, then, I have recourse; do thou, who prayest for so many others, pray also to Jesus for me. Ask him to pardon me, and he will forgive me; tell him that thou desirest my salvation, and he will save me; show how thou canst enrich those who trust in thee. Amen.

Three Hail Marys.

Monday.

TO OBTAIN HOLY PERSEVERANCE.

O Queen of heaven, I, who was once a miserable slave of Lucifer, now dedicate myself to thee, to be thy servant forever; I offer myself to honor thee, and serve thee during my whole life; do thou accept me, and refuse me not, as I should deserve. O my Mother, in thee have I placed all my hopes, from thee do I expect every grace. I bless and thank God, who in his mercy has given me this confidence in thee, which I consider a pledge of my salvation. Alas, miserable wretch that I am, I have hitherto fallen because I have not had recourse to thee. I now hope that, through the merits of Jesus Christ and thy prayers, I have obtained pardon. But I may again lose divine grace; the danger is not past.

My enemies do not sleep. How many new temptations have I still to conquer! Ah, my most sweet Lady, protect me, and permit me not again to become their slave: help me at all times. I know that thou wilt help me, and that with thy help I shall conquer, if I recommend myself to thee; but this is what I fear—I fear that in time of danger I may neglect to call upon thee, and thus be lost. I ask thee, then, for this grace: obtain that, in the assaults of hell, I may always have recourse to thee, saying, Mary, help me. My Mother, permit me not to lose my God.

Three Hail Marys.

Tuesday.

to obtain a good death.

O Mary, how shall I die? Even now, that I think of my sins, and of that decisive moment on which my salvation or eternal damnation depends, of that moment in which I must expire and be judged, I tremble and am confounded. O my most sweet Mother, my hopes are in the blood of Jesus Christ and in thy intercession. O Comfortress of the afflicted, do not, then, abandon me, cease not to console me in that moment of so great affliction. Ah, my Lady, before death obtain me great sorrow for my sins, thorough amendment, and fidelity to God during the re-

mainder of my life. And when my last moment arrives, O Mary, my hope, help me in the great distress in which I shall then be; encourage me, that I may not despair at the sight of my sins, which the devil will place before me. Obtain that I may then invoke thee more frequently; so that I may expire with thy most sweet name and that of thy beloved Son on my lips. Nay, more, my Lady, but forgive my boldness, before I expire do thou come thyself and comfort me with thy presence. Thou hast granted this favor to so many of thy devout servants, I also desire and hope it. I am a sinner, it is true; I do not deserve so great a favor; but I am thy servant, I love thee and have full confidence in thee. O Mary, I shall expect thee; do not disappoint me of this consolation. At least, if I am not worthy of so great a favor, do thou help me from heaven, that I may leave this life loving God and thee, to love thee eternally in paradise.

Three Hail Marys.

Wednesday.

to obtain deliverance from hell.

My most beloved Lady, I thank thee for having delivered me from hell as many times as I have deserved it by my sins. Miserable creature that I was, I was once condemned to that prison,

and perhaps already, after the first sin, the sentence would have been put into execution, if thou, in thy compassion, hadst not helped me. Thou, without even being asked by me, and only in thy goodness, didst restrain divine Justice; and then, conquering my obduracy, thou didst draw me to have confidence in thee. O, into how many other sins should I have afterwards fallen, in the dangers in which I have been, hadst not thou, my loving Mother, preserved me by the graces which thou didst obtain for me! Never allow me to turn my back on thee and on God who, by thy means, has granted me so many graces. My Lady, since thou hast done so much to save me, complete the work, continue the aid. But what do I say? If at a time when I lived forgetful of thee thou didst favor me so much, how much more may I not hope for now that I love thee and recommend myself to thee! No, he can never be lost who recommends himself to thee; he alone is lost who has not recourse to thee. Ah, my Mother, leave me not in my own hands, for I should then be lost; grant that I may always have recourse to thee. Save me, my hope, save me from hell; but, in the first place, save me from sin, which alone can condemn me to it.

Three Hail Marys.

Thursday.

to obtain heaven.

O Queen of paradise, who reignest above all the choirs of angels, and who art the nearest of all creatures to God, I, a miserable sinner, salute thee from this valley of tears, and beseech thee to turn thy compassionate eyes towards me, for whichever side they turn they dispense graces. See, O Mary, in how many dangers I now am, and shall be as long as I live in this world, of losing my soul, of losing heaven and God. In thee, O Lady, I have placed all my hopes. Ah, Mary, when will be that happy day on which I shall see myself safe at thy feet, and contemplate my Mother who has done so much for my salvation? When shall I kiss that hand which has delivered me so many times from hell, and has dispensed me so many graces, when, on account of my sins, I deserved to be hated and abandoned by all? I thank God with my whole heart, who gives me firm confidence in the blood of Jesus Christ and in thee, and in the conviction that thou wilt save me; that thou wilt deliver me from my sins; that thou wilt give me light and strength to execute the divine will; and, in fine, that thou wilt lead me to the gate of paradise. Thy servants have hoped for all this, and not one of them was de-

ceived. No, neither shall I be deceived. O Mary, my full confidence is that thou hast to save me. Beseech thy Son Jesus, as I also beseech him, by the merits of his Passion, to preserve and always increase this confidence in me, and I shall be saved.

Three Hail Marys.

Friday.

TO OBTAIN LOVE TOWARDS HER AND JESUS CHRIST.

O Mary, I already know that thou art the most noble, the most sublime, the most pure, the most beautiful, the most benign, the most holy—in a word, the most amiable of all creatures. O that all knew thee, my Lady, and loved thee as thou dost merit! But I am consoled when I remember that in heaven and on earth there are so many happy souls who live enamored of thy goodness and beauty. Above all, I rejoice that God himself loves thee alone more than he loves all men and angels together. I see also, my Mother, that I am indeed under great obligations to thy Son. I see that he merits infinite love. Thou, who desirest nothing else but to see him loved, hast to obtain me this grace above all others; obtain me great love for Jesus Christ. Thou obtainest all that thou willest from God; ah, then, be graciously pleased to obtain me the grace to

be so united to the divine will that I may never more be separated from it. I do not ask of thee earthly goods, honors, or riches. I ask thee for that which thy heart desires most for me. I wish to love my God. Is it possible that thou refusest to second this my desire, which is so pleasing to thee? Ah no, thou already helpest me; already thou prayest for me. Pray, pray, and cease not to pray until thou seest me safe in heaven, beyond the possibility of evermore losing my Lord, and certain to love him forever, together with thee, my dearest Mother.

Three Hail Marys.

Saturday.

to obtain her patronage.

O my most holy Mother, I see the graces which thou hast obtained for me; and I see the ingratitude of which I have been guilty towards thee. An ungrateful soul is no longer worthy of favors; but I will not on this account distrust thy mercy, which is greater than my ingratitude. O my great advocate, pity me. Thou dispensest all the graces which God grants to us miserable creatures, and for this purpose he has made thee so powerful, so rich, and so benign. He has done so that thou mightest succor us in our miseries. In thy hands, then, do I place my eternal salva-

tion; to thee do I intrust my soul: it was lost; thou, then, by thy intercession hast to save it. I wish to be inscribed amongst thy most devoted servants; reject me not. Thou seekest the miserable to relieve them; abandon me not, who am a wretched sinner, and who have recourse to thee. Speak for me; thy Son does all that thou askest him. Take me under thy protection; that is all that I ask. Yes; for if thou protectest me, I fear nothing. I do not fear my sins; for thou wilt obtain me a remedy for the evil they have done me. I do not fear the devils; for thou art more powerful than all hell. I do not even fear Jesus, my Judge, himself; for by a single prayer of thine he is appeased. I only fear that by my negligence I may cease to recommend myself to thee, and thus be lost. Pray, then, to Jesus for me; tell him that thou protectest me, and then he is sure to pity me. My Mother, in thee too I do trust; in this hope I shall live in peace, and in it I wish to die.

Live, Jesus our love, and Mary our hope!

Three Hail Marys.

PART THIRD.

General Prayers.

MORNING PRAYERS.

On waking say:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

O my God, I offer Thee all my thoughts, words, and actions of this day: grant that they may be for Thy greater glory and the good of my soul.

Then dress, and kneeling before a crucifix or devout picture, say:

AN ACT OF ADORATION.

O great God, sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, I prostrate myself before Thee. With all the angels and saints I adore Thee. I acknowledge Thee to be my Creator and my sovereign Lord, my first beginning and my last end. I render Thee the homage of my being and life. I submit myself to Thy holy will, and I devote myself to Thy divine service, this day and forever.

AN ACT OF FAITH.

O my God, I firmly believe all the sacred truths Thy holy Catholic Church believes and teaches, because Thou hast revealed them, who neither canst deceive nor be deceived.

AN ACT OF HOPE.

O my God, relying upon Thy infinite goodness and promises, I hope to obtain the pardon of my sins, the assistance of Thy grace, and life everlasting, through the merits of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

AN ACT OF CHARITY.

O my God, I love Thee with my whole heart and soul, purely because Thou art infinitely worthy and deserving of my love. I love also my neighbor as myself, for the love of Thee; I forgive all who have injured me, and ask pardon of all whom I have injured.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead

us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen.

THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, Our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified; died, and was buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

THE CONFITEOR.

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to

blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May the Almighty God have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to life everlasting. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of my sins. Amen.

OFFERING TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

To thee, O holy Mary, my sovereign mistress, to thy blessed trust and special charge, and to the bosom of thy mercy, this day, and every day, and at the hour of my death, I commend myself, my soul and my body; to thee I commit all my hope and all my consolation, my distresses and my miseries, my life and the end thereof; that through thy most holy intercession, and through thy merits, all my works may be directed and disposed according to thy will and the will of thy Son. Amen.

THE LITANY OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

(Form to which an indulgence of three hundred days was granted by Pope Pius IX., who suppressed all other forms.)

Lord, have mercy on us.
Christ, have mercy on us.
Lord, have mercy on us.
Jesus, hear us.
Jesus, graciously hear us.
God the Father of heaven,
God the Son, Redeemer of the world,
God the Holy Ghost,
Holy Trinity, one God,
Jesus, Son of the living God,
Jesus, splendor of the Father,
Jesus, brightness of eternal light,
Jesus, king of glory,
Jesus, sun of justice,
Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary,
Jesus amiable,
Jesus admirable,
Jesus, the powerful God,
Jesus, father of the world to come,
Jesus, angel of the great council,
Jesus most powerful,

} *Have mercy on us.*

Jesus most patient,
Jesus most obedient,
Jesus meek and humble of heart,
Jesus, lover of chastity,
Jesus, lover of us,
Jesus, God of peace,
Jesus, author of life,
Jesus, model of all virtues,
Jesus, zealous for souls,
Jesus, our God,
Jesus, our refuge,
Jesus, father of the poor,
Jesus, treasure of the faithful,
Jesus, good shepherd,
Jesus, true light,
Jesus, eternal wisdom,
Jesus, infinite goodness,
Jesus, our way and our life,
Jesus, joy of angels,
Jesus, king of the patriarchs,
Jesus, master of the apostles,
Jesus, teacher of the evangelists,
Jesus, strength of martyrs,
Jesus, light of confessors,
Jesus, purity of virgins,
Jesus, crown of all saints,
Have mercy on us.
Be merciful, *Spare us, O Jesus!*
Be merciful, *Graciously hear us, O Jesus!*

From all evil,
From all sin,
From Thy wrath,
From the snares of the devil,
From the spirit of fornication,
From everlasting death,
From neglect of Thy inspirations,
By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation,
By Thy nativity,
By Thy infancy,
By Thy most divine life,
By Thy labors,
By Thy agony and Passion,
By Thy cross and dereliction,
By Thy languors,
By Thy death and burial,
By Thy resurrection,
By Thy ascension,
By Thy joys,
By Thy glory,

Deliver us, O Jesus.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Jesus!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Graciously hear us, O Jesus!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Have mercy on us, O Jesus!*

Jesus, hear us.

Jesus, graciously hear us.

Let us Pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast said, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," mercifully attend to our supplications, and grant us the gift of Thy divine charity, that we may ever love Thee with our whole hearts, and never desist from Thy praise.

Give us, O Lord, a perpetual fear and love of Thy holy name, for Thou never ceasest to direct and govern by Thy grace those whom Thou instructest in the solidity of Thy love: who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

PRAYERS DURING THE DAY.

THE ANGELUS.

To be said morning, noon, and night, to put us in mind that God the Son became man for our salvation.

The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary: And she conceived of the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, etc.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, etc.

And the Word was made flesh: And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary, etc.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray.

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may, by His Passion and cross, be brought to the glory of the resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

During the Paschal season, that is, from Holy Saturday at noon to Trinity Eve at noon, instead of the foregoing, is said, standing:

THE REGINA CŒLI.

Queen of heaven, rejoice. Alleluia.

For he whom thou wast made worthy to bear. Alleluia.

Hath risen as he said. Alleluia.

Pray for us to our God. Alleluia.

V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary. Alleluia.

R. For the Lord hath risen indeed. Alleluia.

Let us Pray.

God, who through the resurrection of Thy Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, hast vouchsafed to make glad the whole world, grant us, we beseech

Thee, that, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, his Mother, we may attain the joys of eternal life. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

EVENING PRAYERS.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Say the Act of Adoration, page 433, the Acts of Faith, Hope, and Charity, page 434, the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," "I believe in God," etc.

Let us return thanks to God for the favors bestowed on us.

How shall I be able to thank Thee, O Lord, for all Thy favors? Thou hast thought of me from all eternity; Thou hast brought me forth from nothing; Thou hast given Thy life to redeem me, and Thou continuest still, daily, to load me with Thy favors. Alas, my God! what return can I make Thee for all Thy benefits, and in particular for the favors of this day? Join me, ye blessed spirits, and all ye elect, in praising the God of mercies, who is so bountiful to so unworthy a creature.

Let us beg of God to make known our sins to us.

O Holy Ghost, eternal source of light, remove my darkness, and dispel those shades that hide from me the filth and enormity of my offences.

Show me, I beseech Thee, the sins I have this day committed, in thought, word, and action. Grant me a feeling sense of them, that I may detest them all from the bottom of my heart, and dread nothing so much as ever to commit them hereafter.

Let us examine our conscience, and consider where we have been this day, and in what company. Let us call to mind the duties of our state, and our different offences.

Against God. By omissions, negligence in our religious duties, irreverence in church, wilful distractions in prayer, faults in our intentions, resistance to divine grace, oaths, murmurings, want of confidence, and resignation.

Against our neighbor. By rash judgments, hatred, jealousy, contempt, desire of revenge, quarrelling, passion, imprecations, injuries, detraction, raillery, false reports, damaging either in goods or reputation, bad example, scandal, want of obedience, respect, charity, or fidelity.

Against ourselves. By vanity, human respect, lies; by thoughts, desires, discourse, or actions contrary to purity; by intemperance, rage, impatience; by a useless and sensual life, or sloth in complying with the duties of our state.

Then recite the Confiteor, page 435.

A FIRM PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT.

O eternal God, against whom I have sinned, I wish from my heart that I had never offended Thee; but as I have been so unhappy, grant me now grace nevermore to offend Thee. Thou willest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted and live. Convert me, then, and I shall be converted. Have mercy on me according to Thy great mercy, and according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my iniquities. I renounce all sin, and firmly purpose to shun all the occasions of it, and to walk henceforth in the path of Thy commandments. This is my fixed resolution, which I hope I shall faithfully keep, relying upon Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE LITANY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(An indulgence of three hundred days each time.)

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of heaven, *Have mercy on us.*

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, *Have mercy on us.*

God the Holy Ghost, *Have mercy on us.*
Holy Trinity, one God, *Have mercy on us.*
Holy Mary,
Holy Mother of God,
Holy Virgin of virgins,
Mother of Christ,
Mother of divine grace,
Mother most pure,
Mother most chaste,
Mother inviolate,
Mother undefiled,
Mother most amiable,
Mother most admirable,
Mother of our Creator,
Mother of our Saviour,
Virgin most prudent,
Virgin most venerable,
Virgin most renowned,
Virgin most powerful,
Virgin most merciful,
Virgin most faithful,
Mirror of justice,
Seat of wisdom,
Cause of our joy,
Spiritual vessel,
Vessel of honor,
Singular vessel of devotion,
Mystical rose,

Pray for us.

Tower of David,
Tower of ivory,
House of gold,
Ark of the covenant,
Gate of heaven,
Morning star,
Health of the sick,
Refuge of sinners,
Comforter of the afflicted,
Help of Christians,
Queen of angels,
Queen of patriarchs,
Queen of prophets,
Queen of apostles,
Queen of martyrs,
Queen of confessors,
Queen of virgins,
Queen of all saints,
} *Pray for us.*

Queen conceived without original sin, *Pray for us.*

Queen of the most holy Rosary, *Pray for us.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Spare us, O Lord!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Graciously hear us, O Lord!*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, *Have mercy on us!*

V. May the divine assistance always remain with us.

R. Amen.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

Let us Pray.

Defend, we beseech Thee, O Lord, through the intercession of the blessed Mary, ever virgin, this family from all adversity; and as in all humility they prostrate themselves before Thee, do Thou mercifully protect them against all the snares of their enemies; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pour down Thy blessing, O Lord, on Thy holy Church; on our holy Father, the Pope; on this diocese; on our most reverend Archbishop, and all pastors of souls; on this country; on our rulers, and all superiors, temporal and spiritual; on this congregation; on this family; on our parents, relations, benefactors, friends, and enemies. Help the poor, the sick, and those that are in their agony; convert all heretics, and enlighten the infidels.

Let us pray for the souls of all the faithful departed, particularly for those of our friends and benefactors.

De Profundis.

Out of the depths I have cried to Thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thy ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall stand?

For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness; and by reason of Thy law I have waited for Thee, O Lord.

My soul hath relied on his word: my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

From the morning watch, even until night, let Israel hope in the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plentiful redemption.

And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

V. Eternal rest give unto them, O Lord!

R. And let perpetual light shine upon them.

V. May they rest in peace.

R. Amen.

V. O Lord, hear my prayer.

R. And let my cry come unto Thee.

Let us Pray.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, grant to the souls of Thy servants departed the remission of all their sins, that through pious supplications they may obtain that pardon which they have always desired, who livest and reignest, world without end. Amen.

Let us recommend our rest to God, to the Blessed Virgin, and the saints.

V. Vouchsafe, O Lord, this night to keep us without sin.

R. Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

PRAYER FOR PROTECTION DURING THE NIGHT.

O angel of God, to whose holy care I am committed by the supreme clemency, enlighten, defend, and protect me this night from all sin and danger. Amen.

Visit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, this habitation, and drive from it all the snares of the enemy. Let Thy holy angels dwell herein, to preserve us in peace; and may Thy blessing be upon us forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

God the Father, bless us; Jesus Christ, defend and keep us; the virtue of the Holy Ghost enlighten and sanctify us this night and forever;

and may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Bless, O Lord, the repose I am going to take in order to renew my strength, that I may be better able to serve Thee. O all ye saints and angels, but chiefly thou, O Mother of God, intercede for me this night and during the rest of my life, but particularly at the hour of my death.

May the divine assistance remain always with us. Amen.

DEVOUT METHOD OF HEARING MASS IN HONOR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

The following method of hearing Mass may be used on Saturdays, on the festivals established by the Church in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or on any other occasion, according to a person's devotion.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS.

In the name of the Father, etc.

O infinite Creator and merciful God! Thou hast been pleased, by the Incarnation of Thy only begotten Son, to repair the losses caused by the

disobedience of our first parents; and at the time appointed by Thy eternal wisdom Thou didst send the angel Gabriel to that chosen maid who, by becoming the Mother of the Redeemer, crushed the infernal serpent's head and brought salvation to all mankind. Do Thou, O Lord, who displayed Thy infinite power in forgiving and showing mercy to poor sinners, give ear to our humble prayers, and grant that we, who firmly believe that Thy Eternal Son became man in the chaste womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and that she is, therefore, truly the Mother of God, may be helped by her prayers. I adore Thee, O my God, in this profound mystery, the fruits whereof were first felt by the precursor, who, at the words of Mary's salutation to St. Elizabeth, was sanctified in his mother's womb. Let us give praise to God, for he is good, and his mercy endureth forever. My soul doth magnify the Lord; my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. But I am unworthy, O Lord, of Thy favors. What am I but a miserable worm of the earth; how can I dare to appear before Thee, O my God?

I confess to Almighty God, to the blessed and immaculate Mary, ever virgin, to St. Michael the Archangel, to St. John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, that I have sinned in thought, word, and deed, through

my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed and immaculate Mary, ever virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

May the Almighty God have mercy on me, forgive me my sins, and bring me to everlasting life. Amen.

May the almighty and merciful Lord grant me pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins. Amen.

To thee, O merciful Queen of heaven and earth, I have recourse. It has never been heard of that any one invoked thee and was forsaken. Plead for me before thy divine Son and obtain for me the pardon of my sins.

AT THE INTROIT.

Hail, holy Mother, who didst bring forth the King who reigns over heaven and earth forever!

Hail, Mary, full of grace! the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

THE KYRIE ELEISON.

O Lord, have mercy on me! O Jesus, have mercy on me! O Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner!

O Mary, Refuge of sinners, pray for me!

AT THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS.

Glory be to God on high, and peace on earth to men of good will. O my God! I unite my praises with those which the heavenly spirits sang to Thee on that night, when Thy beloved Son, made man, was born of the Virgin Mary in the stable of Bethlehem. My heart is full of gladness, because for my salvation the Word of God was made man, and dwelt among men. Glory, praise, and adoration be to God the Father, to God the Son, and to God the Holy Ghost, three persons in one God. O holy Virgin Mary, thou art the glorious Mother of my Redeemer. Remember the joy thy immaculate and maternal heart did feel when for the first time thou didst behold, adore, and embrace thy God and thy infant Son in the stable of Bethlehem. O blessed Mother of God, pray to thy Son, that I may be made partaker of the joy of heaven. Amen.

AT THE COLLECT.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Almighty God, that Thy faithful, who rejoice under the name and protection of the most blessed Virgin Mary, may, by her pious intercession, be delivered from all evils here on earth, and be brought to the eternal joy of heaven. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOR THE CHURCH.

Mercifully hear, O Lord, the prayers of Thy Church, that all opposition and error being removed, she may serve Thee with undisturbed devotion.

FOR THE POPE.

O Lord God, the pastor and ruler of all the faithful, look down on Thy servant N., whom Thou hast appointed pastor over Thy Church, and grant, we beseech Thee, that he may edify, both by word and example, those who are under his charge, and that with the flock entrusted to him he may arrive at eternal happiness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AT THE EPISTLE.

O almighty and merciful God, who never ceasest to direct our hearts to the knowledge of Thy

law, to instruct us through the ministry of Thy holy Church, grant that we may faithfully attend to the lessons of salvation which Thou givest us. May Thy holy word fructify in the soil of our hearts; may our souls be guided by Thy holy law, and directed to the possession of Thee. O God, have mercy on us, and bring us to Thee, as by the appearance of a miraculous star Thou didst bring the Wise Men to the stable of Bethlehem, where they found and adored the Saviour in the arms of the Blessed Virgin Mary, his holy Mother, and offered him, with their hearts, their mysterious presents. O blessed Mary, obtain for us the grace to follow the inspirations of the Holy Ghost, and amid the perils that beset our path in this world, to direct our steps in the way of salvation. O Mary, guide us to Jesus,

> . . . by the light of thee,
> O bright and shining Star of the sea!

AT THE GOSPEL.

My dear Redeemer, I give Thee thanks for the inestimable favor Thou hast bestowed upon me, by calling me to the knowledge of Thy holy Gospel, and making me a child of the one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I believe and confess all and each of the articles of faith which Thou hast revealed to Thy Church, and which

the same Church proposes and teaches. I am ready, if it be Thy will, to shed the last drop of my blood for my faith. I return Thee thanks for that love which prompted Thee to leave to Thy Church in the holy Sacrament of the altar Thy body and blood, Thy soul and divinity. I believe, O Lord, that Thou art really present in the Holy Eucharist. When with the eyes of faith I see my Lord upon the altar, I can say: "Now, O Lord, let Thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen my salvation."

O sweet Mary! Thou didst bring thy holy Son to the Temple, and didst offer him to the Eternal Father. The holy man, Simeon, received Jesus in his arms from thy hands. Oh, bring my Saviour into my poor heart, that I may love nothing else but him and thee. Amen.

If the Credo be said at Mass, say the Apostles' Creed.

AT THE OFFERTORY.

O holy Father, almighty and eternal God, accept from the hands of Thy minister the unspotted Host, which he offers Thee in the name of the Church, for the honor, glory, and adoration of Thy divine Majesty, in memory of the nativity, life, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in honor of the

Blessed Virgin Mary, and of all the saints. In the spirit of humility and contrition of heart I now offer to Thee, O Lord, this bread and wine, which, through the words of benediction, which Christ our Lord instituted at the Last Supper, will be changed into the body and blood of Thy divine Son, Our Saviour. Come, O almighty and eternal God, the sanctifier, and bless this sacrifice prepared for the praise and glory of Thy holy name. Receive, O Lord, this sacrifice to the praise and glory of Thy infinite Majesty, to our benefit, and to that of the whole Church, and also to the honor of the blessed Mother of Jesus Christ, that she may vouchsafe to intercede for us in heaven whose memory we celebrate on earth. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O merciful God, direct and assist me in the dangers of this life, as Thou didst direct Mary, the blessed Mother of Jesus, and her pure spouse, St. Joseph, in their flight into Egypt. O Lord, save Thy servants, who repose all their confidence in Thee, and who honor Thy blessed Mother.

SECRET.

May this oblation procure us peace and happiness here and hereafter, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

FOR THE CHURCH.

Protect us, O Lord, while we assist at Thy sacred mysteries, that being employed in acts of religion we may serve Thee both in body and mind.

FOR THE POPE.

Be appeased, O Lord, with the offering we have made, and cease not to protect Thy servant, N., whom Thou hast been pleased to appoint Pastor over Thy Church. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AT THE PREFACE.

It is truly meet and just, right and available to salvation, that we should always, and in all places, give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Father Almighty, eternal God, and bless and glorify Thee, on the *veneration* of the blessed Mary, ever virgin, who, by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, conceived Thy only begotten Son, and her virginity still remaining, brought forth the eternal Light of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. By whom the angels praise Thy Majesty, the dominations adore it, the powers tremble before it, the heavens, the heavenly virtues and blessed seraphim with common jubilee glorify it. Together

with whom we beseech Thee, that we may be admitted to join our humble voices, saying:

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth; the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

AT THE CANON.

O Almighty God! Thy beloved Son and my Lord Jesus Christ hath commanded me, by his words and examples, to be always occupied with the things that are Thine. It was in the Temple that his blessed Mother and St. Joseph found him on the third day after his departure from them. Grant that I may never depart from Thee by sin. But if I ever have the misfortune of forfeiting Thy holy grace, I will sue again for mercy in the Sacrament of Penance. Pray for me, O glorious Mother of God, and be my advocate before thy Son. At thy suggestion he changed, in Cana of Galilee, water into wine; beg of him to change my heart too, to purify and sanctify it, that it may be worthy of him forever.

O my God, when Mary pronounced these words: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word," Thy only begotten Son became incarnate in her womb. In like

manner at the words of consecration, which are about to be pronounced by Thy minister, the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, descends on our altars, and miraculously changes the substance of bread and wine into his body and blood, soul and divinity. I humbly adore Thee, O loving Saviour, in this mystery of Thy love. Through that divine charity which moved Thee to utter those consoling words a few moments before the institution of this sacrament: "With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer," I beg of Thee to have mercy on me, and to forgive me my sins. Help me in my necessities, strengthen me against the enemies of my soul, and grant me the grace I stand in need of to secure my eternal salvation.

I pray to Thee also, O Lord, for Thy holy Church, for our holy Father the Pope, for our bishops, and all pastors of souls; for my parents, relations, benefactors, friends, and enemies. Grant Thy particular blessings to the pious clients of Thy blessed Mother. Bless the poor, the sick, and those who are in their agony. Have mercy on those who have recommended themselves to my prayers, who pray for me, and finally on all those for whom I am in justice or charity bound to pray. Grant peace and concord to all Christian princes and people. Convert poor sin-

ners, enlighten infidels, and bring back heretics from the ways of error. May all be united in one fold, under one shepherd, Jesus Christ, the true pastor of our souls.

Holy Mary, thy divine Son now comes upon the altar. Present to him my lowly adoration. O my Jesus, come; come, my Saviour. Receive the prayers I offer Thee through the hands of Thy blessed Mother. Come, O Lord Jesus. With the angels, who are prostrate before the altar, I exclaim: Holy, holy, holy. Hosanna to him that cometh from the highest heavens—ever blessed be his name!

AT THE ELEVATION OF THE HOST.

O Jesus Christ, Thou art the true Son of God. I adore Thee in this holy Sacrament. Be Thou propitious to me and forgive me my sins.

AT THE ELEVATION OF THE CHALICE.

O adorable blood, which Jesus the true Son of God and true Son of Mary, has shed for me on the cross! I adore Thee, O my Redeemer, and I hide myself in Thy sacred wounds, from which the price of my redemption flowed. O Jesus, grant that I may live for Thee and die for Thee. Help, O Lord, Thy servants whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious blood.

AN ACT OF THANKSGIVING.

Accept, O most merciful God, the sacrifice of Thy Son in thanksgiving for all the benefits Thou hast granted me. Thou hast created me to Thy own image and likeness. Thou hast redeemed me with Thy Son's precious blood; Thou hast called me to the true faith, and preserved me from eternal death, which I so often deserved for my sins. What return shall I make Thee for these and all Thy favors? I offer Thee Thy only Son, who, before he instituted this most holy Sacrament, lifted up his eyes, and gave thanks to Thee, his Father Almighty. I offer him now immolated on this altar; and thus I make an adequate thanksgiving for all the blessings Thou hast bestowed on me and on all mankind.

AN ACT OF SUPPLICATION.

O my God, I am unworthy to appear before Thee. I acknowledge my misery and poverty. Thou art the fountain of all grace, and the source of all good. Thy beloved Son has commanded me to pray to Thee, and to call Thee by the consoling name of Father. Therefore I prostrate myself with confidence before Thee, and present to Thee my humble supplication through the same Lord Jesus Christ, who makes intercession

for me. Grant me a lively faith, a firm and constant hope, and an ardent charity towards Thee and my neighbor. Save my soul. Give me strength to vanquish my spiritual enemies. Grant me an humble resignation to Thy holy will in the adversities of this life—and above all the gifts of final perseverance in Thy love and service. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Have mercy also, O Lord, on the souls of the faithful departed—on those of my parents, benefactors, relations, friends, and on all those for whom I am bound to pray. Remember, O Lord, those who while living were most devoted to Thy blessed Mother; grant them all rest from their torments, and bring them to heaven. I apply to the souls in purgatory the holy indulgences granted to the faithful who assist at the holy sacrifice of the Mass, and I intend to enter into the dispositions necessary to gain them, through Thy grace and mercy.

Our Father, who art in heaven, etc.

O my Redeemer! Thou hast commanded me by word and example to forgive my enemies. I forgive them from the bottom of my heart, for the love of Thee. Grant them, O Lord, all the graces and blessings that are necessary for their spiritual and temporal welfare.

Thou didst not forget me, O sweet Jesus, even

in Thy agony. Before expiring on the cross Thou didst leave me Thy sorrowful and afflicted Mother to be my Mother also. "Behold thy Son—behold thy Mother." I return Thee thanks, O my Saviour, for this inestimable favor. And thou, my tender Mother, thou hast begotten me at the foot of the cross. I am the child of thy sorrow. Take me under thy protection. Conduct me to Jesus. Teach me to love him. O Mother, O tender Mother! how happy am I in the glorious privilege of being thy child. O Mary, show that thou art my Mother.

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on me. (Three times.)

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION.

O Jesus! Thou hast given us in Thy Holy Eucharist Thy body and blood to be our spiritual nourishment, through which we may have life everlasting. Would that I were worthy to receive Thee this day in the holy Communion! I desire, with all my heart, to receive the living bread, which came down from heaven; but I am unworthy—I do not dare approach Thee.

O Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say but the word and my soul shall be saved. (Three times.)

O sweet Mother, obtain for me the grace of

receiving the holy Communion with worthy dispositions, especially in my last sickness, when I shall be about to appear before the tribunal of God, that, through the merits of my Saviour's death and Passion, and thy intercession, I may have life everlasting. Amen.

AFTER COMMUNION.

My loving Saviour, after having suffered for three hours the most cruel agony; after having accomplished all that had been foretold of Thee, Thou didst expire on the cross. All nature trembled at Thy death. The rocks were split asunder —and yet, alas, my ungrateful heart is insensible. I have, by my sins, been Thy heartless executioner. O my Redeemer, how can I dare to stand before Thee? But Thou didst pardon the penitent thief; and this inspires me with the hope that Thou wilt pardon me also, and admit me, like him, to the enjoyment of Thy happy kingdom.

O Mary, Queen of martyrs, through the sorrow which overwhelmed thy heart at the foot of the cross, while thou wert witnessing the last painful act of Our Saviour's Passion—through the anguish thou didst feel when thou didst accompany his sacred body to the tomb, and the desolation thou didst experience on thy return, I beseech

thee to obtain that his Passion and thy sorrows may be ever engraven on my heart, that I may never cease to deplore my sins, which were the cause of his death and of thy anguish.

AT THE POST COMMUNION.

Having received, O Lord, what is calculated to advance our salvation, grant that we may be always protected by the patronage of the blessed Mary, ever virgin, in whose honor we have offered this sacrifice to Thy divine Majesty.

FOR THE CHURCH.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, not to leave exposed to the perils of human life those whom Thou hast permitted to partake of these mysteries.

FOR THE POPE.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, that the participation of this divine Sacrament may protect us from all dangers, and redound to the safety and defence of Thy servant N., whom Thou hast appointed pastor over Thy Church, together with the flock committed to his charge. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

AT THE BENEDICTION.

Holy and adorable Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to Thee be honor, praise, and glory.

May this blessing, which I humbly receive from the hands of Thy minister, be an anticipation of that one which I trust Thou wilt give me after my death, and on the day of judgment. May the blessing of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Ghost come upon me now and forevermore. Amen.

AT THE LAST GOSPEL.

O my God, I believe in Thee, I hope in Thee, and I love Thee with all my heart. May Thy holy Gospel be propagated throughout the world. Assist the ministers whom Thou hast appointed to carry the light of faith to unbelievers, or to revive it among lukewarm Christians. Grant to all the clergy that spirit of zeal, fortitude, and knowledge which Thou didst impart to Thy holy Apostles on the day of Pentecost. Thou hast commanded us, O Lord, to pray to the Lord of the harvest, that he may send laborers to work in his vineyard. Wherefore I humbly beseech Thee, who didst open the prophets' mouths, and didst call the Apostles to announce Thy word, to send us worthy pastors, and to grant that they may edify the flock, destroy errors and abuses, root out vice, dispel ignorance, and establish Thy reign in the souls Thou hast redeemed with Thy blood. O Word of God made flesh, grant us the

grace that we may be admitted to the kingdom of Thy glory. Amen.

A PRAYER AFTER MASS.

I give Thee thanks, O my God, for having permitted me to assist at this holy sacrifice. I humbly ask pardon for all the negligences and distractions I may have given way to. Eternal praise be given to Thy holy name, for all the privileges bestowed on the Blessed Virgin Mary, whom Thou didst preserve from the stain of original sin, and didst make worthy to be the Mother of Our Redeemer. Thou didst place her on a throne of glory to be Queen of heaven and earth. I rejoice at her glory, because she is the Mother of Jesus, and my Mother also. O loving Mother, protect thy children, and conduct them to heaven. O holy Mary, succor the distressed; strengthen the weak; comfort the afflicted; pray for the people; intercede for the clergy; make supplication for devout women. May all experience thy assistance who celebrate thy holy commemoration.

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray.

Grant, we beseech Thee, O Lord, that we Thy servants may enjoy perpetual health of mind and body; and, by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, may be delivered from present sorrow and attain to eternal joy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS ORDERED BY POPE LEO XIII.

To be said kneeling after the celebration of Low Mass.

The priest with the people recites the "Hail Mary" thrice; then the

SALVE REGINA.

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness, and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us Pray.

O God, our refuge and our strength, look down with favor upon Thy people who cry to Thee; and through the intercession of the glorious and immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, of her spouse, blessed Joseph, of Thy holy apostles Peter and Paul, and all the saints, mercifully and graciously hear the prayers which we pour forth to Thee for the conversion of sinners and the liberty and exaltation of holy mother Church. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Add the invocation:

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. We humbly beseech God to command him, and do thou, O prince of the heavenly host, by the divine power thrust into hell Satan and the other evil spirits who roam through the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

METHOD OF HEARING MASS,

By St. Leonard of Port Maurice.

We owe four duties to God:

1. Praise or adoration.
2. Satisfaction or expiation.
3. Thanksgiving.

4. Acknowledgment of our dependence on him, as the Author and Principle of grace.

1. From the Beginning of the Mass to the Gospel.

Sink into the abyss of your nothingness before the infinite Majesty of God, reciting the Confiteor or any appropriate prayer, then say:

O my God, I adore Thee, and acknowledge Thee to be the Lord and Master of my soul! I protest that all I am and have are Thy gifts. And, because Thy Majesty merits infinite honor and homage, I, who am a poor miserable creature, utterly incapable of paying the great debt which I owe to Thee, offer to Thee the humiliations and homage which Jesus Christ offers to Thee on the altar. What Jesus does, I intend to do likewise, in union with him. I humble and prostrate myself before Thy majesty: I adore Thee, in union with the humiliations of Jesus. I am filled with joy and delight in reflecting that Jesus gives Thee, for me, infinite honor and homage.

2. From the Gospel to the Elevation.

Behold, my God, the traitor, who has so often rebelled against Thee. Ah! with a sorrowful heart, and with all the affections of my soul, I abhor and detest my most grievous sins, and I offer for

them the same satisfaction which Jesus presents to Thee on the altar. I offer to Thee all the merits of Jesus, the blood of Jesus, Jesus entirely, God and man, who is here immolated again for me. And since my Jesus himself is on this altar my Mediator and my Advocate, and since, with his most precious blood, he implored pardon for me, I unite with the cry of his blood, and supplicate mercy for all my sins. The blood of Jesus cries for mercy, and my sorrowful heart also implores mercy. Ah! my dear God, if my tears do not move Thee, let at least the groans of my Jesus excite Thy pity. Why should he not obtain for me that mercy which he obtained for the human race upon the cross? Yes, I hope that for the sake of that most precious blood, Thou wilt pardon all my most grievous sins, which I will continue to bewail till my last breath.

3. From the Elevation to the Communion.

Behold me, O my most loving God! loaded with the general and particular benefits which Thou hast bestowed, and wilt bestow upon me in time and eternity. I know that Thy mercies to me have been, and are, infinite. But I am ready to pay Thee for all, even to the last farthing. Behold the tribute of my gratitude, the payment

which I offer for all Thy goodness, is this divine blood, this most precious body, this innocent Victim, which I present to Thee by the hands of the priest. I am certain that this oblation is sufficient to pay for all the gifts Thou hast conferred upon me; this gift of infinite value is an equivalent for all the favors I have ever received, or now receive, from Thee. Ah! ye holy angels, and all ye blessed spirits, help me to thank my God; and in thanksgiving for his great benefits offer to him not only the Mass, but also all the Masses that are now celebrated throughout the whole world, that his loving goodness may be fully recompensed for all the graces which he has bestowed, and is to bestow, upon me now and for eternity. Amen.

4. From the Communion to the End.

Make a spiritual communion if you do not receive really.

My dear God, I acknowledge that I am utterly unworthy of Thy favor; I confess my infinite unworthiness, and that, for my manifold and grievous sins, I do not deserve to be heard. But how canst Thou refuse to hear Thy divine Son, who, on this altar, prays for me, and offers for me his blood and his life? Ah! my most loving God, hear the prayers of this my great Advocate, and

for his sake grant me all the graces which Thou knowest to be necessary to secure the great affair of my eternal salvation. I am now encouraged to ask of Thee a general pardon of all my sins and the gift of final perseverance. Trusting in the prayers of my Jesus, I ask of Thee, O my God! all virtues in a heroic degree, and all the efficacious helps necessary to make me truly a saint. I ask of Thee the conversion of all sinners, and particularly of those who are related to me, either by ties of kindred, or spiritually; I ask of Thee the deliverance, not of one soul only, but of all the souls in purgatory. Deliver them all, so that by the efficacy of this divine sacrifice that prison of purification may remain empty. Convert all living souls; may this miserable world become a paradise of delights for Thee, in which having been loved, and reverenced, and praised by all, may we come at length to praise and bless Thee for all eternity. Amen.

Ask here, with confidence, for the fulness of all good, for yourself, for the holy Church, for your relatives, and for the relief of the suffering souls in purgatory.

The above prayers may be repeated over and over, or similar ones used, as no particular words are necessary.

After Mass, make an act of thanksgiving, and leave the church in a spirit of contrition, as if you were returning from Calvary.

MASS FOR THE DEAD.

AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS.

Deliver me, O Lord, from eternal death in that tremendous day when the heavens and the earth shall be shaken, when Thou shalt come to judge the world with fire. Seized am I with trembling, and I fear for that approaching trial and that wrath to come. Oh, that day, that day of wrath, of calamity, and misery; that great and bitter day, indeed, when Thou shalt come to judge the world with fire!

Eternal rest give them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine on them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

THE CONFITEOR.

I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary, ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to you, father, that I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore I beseech the blessed Mary, ever virgin, the blessed Michael the Archangel, the blessed John the Baptist, the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and

all the saints, and you, father, to pray to the Lord our God for me.

Pray, then, for pardon, thus:

May God have mercy on me, forgive my sins, and lead me to eternal life! May the almighty and merciful God grant me the pardon, absolution, and remission of all my sins!

INTROIT.

When the priest mounts the steps of the altar, imagine you hear the souls in purgatory repeating the following verses, as if to implore your prayers:

Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends, because the hand of the Lord hath touched me. My flesh is consumed, my bone hath cleaved to my skin, and nothing but lips are left about my teeth. Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends. (Job xix. 20, 21.)

Eternal rest, etc.

KYRIE ELEISON.

Lord, have mercy on them!
Christ, have mercy on them!
Lord, have mercy on them!
Repeat each three times.

THE COLLECT.

O God, the Creator and Redeemer of all the faithful, give to the souls of Thy servants de-

parted the remission of all their sins, that through the help of pious supplications they may obtain the pardon which they have always desired. Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen.

THE EPISTLE.

In those days the most valiant Judas, having made a gathering, sent twelve thousand drachms of silver to Jerusalem for sacrifice to be offered for the sins of the dead, thinking well and religiously concerning the resurrection. (For if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead.) And because he considered that they who had fallen asleep with godliness had great grace laid up for them. It is, therefore, a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins. (II. Mach. xii.)

GRADUAL.

Grant to them eternal rest, O Lord, and may perpetual light shine on them. The just shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not fear the evil hearing. (Ps. cxi.)

TRACT.

Release, O Lord, the souls of all the faithful departed from the bonds of their sins; and by the

assistance of Thy grace may they escape the sentence of condemnation, and enjoy the bliss of eternal light.

Here, sometimes, is said the following hymn. When you perceive it is not said at the altar, you may pass it over also, and go on to the Gospel.

DIES IRÆ.

Nigher still, and still more nigh,
Draws the day of prophecy,
Doom'd to melt the earth and sky.

Oh, what trembling there shall be
When the world its Judge shall see,
Coming in dread majesty!

Hark! the trumpet thrilling tone
From sepulchral regions lone
Summons all before the throne.

Time and death it doth appall
To see the buried ages all
Rise to answer at the call.

Now the books are open spread,
Now the writing must be read
Which condemns the quick and dead.

Now before the Judge severe
Hidden things must all appear;
Naught can pass unpunished here.

What shall guilty I then plead?
Who for me will intercede,
When the saints shall comfort need?

King of dreadful majesty!
Who doth freely justify,
Fount of pity, save Thou me!

Recollect, O Love divine!
'Twas for this lost sheep of Thine
Thou Thy glory didst resign.

Satest wearied seeking me,
Sufferedst upon the tree;
Let not vain Thy labor be.

Judge of justice, hear my prayer;
Spare me, Lord, in mercy spare,
Ere the reckoning-day appear.

Lo, Thy gracious face I seek!
Shame and grief are on my cheek;
Sighs and tears my sorrows speak.

Thou didst Mary's guilt forgive,
Didst the dying thief receive,
Hence doth hope within me live.

Worthless are my prayers, I know,
Yet, oh, cause me not to go
Into everlasting woe.

Severed from the guilty band,
Make me with Thy sheep to stand,
Placing me on Thy right hand.

When the cursed in anguish flee
Into flames of misery,
With the blest then call Thou me.

Suppliant in the dust I lie!
My heart a cinder, crushed and dry;
Help me, Lord, when death is nigh!

Full of tears, and full of dread,
Is the day that wakes the dead;
Calling all with solemn blast,

From the ashes of the past.
Lord of mercy, Jesus blest,
Grant the faithful light and rest. Amen.

THE GOSPEL.

At that time Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Amen, amen, I say unto you that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son also to have life in himself; and he hath given him power to do judgment, because he is the Son of man. Wonder not at this, for the hour cometh wherein all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have done good shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment. (John v.)

THE OFFERTORY.

O Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory! deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the flames of hell and from the deep pit. Deliver them from the lion's mouth, lest hell swallow them, lest they fall into darkness; and let Thy standard-bearer, St. Michael, bring them into the holy light which Thou hast promised of old to Abraham and his posterity. We offer Thee, O Lord, a sacrifice of praise and of prayer: accept it on behalf of the

souls we commemorate this day, and let them pass from death to life.

Here make an offering also of your own death and sufferings in union with the holy sacrifice, thus:

O my God, I offer Thee also the hour of my death and all the pains I am destined to suffer from this moment until my last breath. Give me strength to bear them with perfect conformity to Thy will. I cheerfully offer Thee, moreover, all the pains which Thou shalt prepare for me in purgatory.

It is just that the fire should punish in me all the insults I have offered to Thee. O holy prison, when shall I find myself shut up in thee, secure of never again being able to lose my God? O holy fire, when wilt thou purify me from so many stains and render me worthy to enter the land of bliss? I offer all these pains to Thy glory, uniting them with the bitter pains of Jesus' Passion. Eternal Father! I sacrifice to Thee my life and my whole being. I entreat Thee to accept this my sacrifice in union with and through the merits of this great sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen.

Almighty God, who art the guardian of souls, the safeguard of salvation, and the confidence of all believers, look mercifully down upon us, and through the merits of Thy dear Son, whose sacred

body we offer in this sacrifice, bless the graves of our departed friends, that those mortal bodies which there repose, after the course of this life is ended, may with their happy souls at the great judgment day be found worthy to participate in the rewards of eternal life.

Enter not, O Lord, into judgment with these Thy servants, for with Thee shall no man be justified except through Thee the remission of all his sins shall be accorded. We beseech Thee, therefore, let not the sentence of Thy justice lie heavy upon those whom the earnest prayer of Christian faith recommends to Thee; but rather, by the succor of Thy grace, may they be found worthy to escape the avenging judgment who were signed with the seal of the Holy Trinity while they lived.

Graciously regard, O Lord, these gifts which we offer Thee for the souls of the faithful departed, that, by celestial remedies made pure, they may repose in Thy compassionate mercy. Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord. Amen.

When the priest, turning towards the people, says, "Orate, fratres" ("Pray, my brethren"), answer:

May the Lord receive this sacrifice from thy hands, to the praise and glory of his holy name,

for the salvation of our souls, and for the repose of the faithful departed.

THE SECRET.

Look favorably down, O Lord, we beseech Thee, upon this sacrifice which we offer for the souls of Thy departed servants, that, as Thou wast pleased to bestow on them the merit of Christian faith, Thou mayest also grant them its reward. Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord. Amen.

THE PREFACE.

It is truly meet and right, just and salutary, that we should always and everywhere give thanks to Thee, O holy Lord, Almighty Father, everlasting God, through Christ our Lord, who by dying hath destroyed death for us, and rising again hath renewed our life, and who hath left us this tremendous sacrifice as a propitation for our sins and for the sins of the faithful departed. Mercifully grant, therefore, that they for whom it is offered this day may speedily be released from all their sufferings, and find eternal rest and perpetual light with Thee in paradise; that there we, with them, may praise and celebrate Thy majesty, in company with all the angels and archangels, the celestial powers, the blessed seraphs,

and the whole host of heaven, who chant Thy glory, evermore repeating: Holy! holy! holy! is the Lord God of armies! the heavens and the earth are full of Thy glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

THE CANON.

We therefore suppliantly beseech Thee, O Father of mercies, through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord, graciously to accept and bless this holy sacrifice which we offer Thee for the peace and prosperity of the holy Catholic Church, for Thy servant, our father, Pope [N.], for our bishop and clergy, and for all Thy faithful Catholic people, for the living, that they may prepare for death, and for the dead that they may obtain eternal rest.

MEMENTO OF THE LIVING.

Be mindful, O Lord, of Thy servants N.N. [*here pause and recommend to God any living friend for whom you feel urged to pray during this Mass*], and of all those friends who are very near and very dear to me, and of all those who have asked for or desire my prayers, or for whom I ought especially to pray; and so direct and strengthen

them by Thy holy grace during life that at the hour of their death the enemy may not prevail against them. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

O almighty and merciful God! who hast bestowed on the human race both the means of salvation and the gift of eternal life, look graciously upon us, Thy servants, and cherish these souls which Thou hast created, that in the hour of our departure, being free from the stain of sin, we may merit to be borne upwards by the hands of the holy angels to Thee, Our Creator.

Accept, O Lord, we beseech Thee, this sacrifice which we offer Thee for the souls of the faithful departed, and grant to us also who still remain the grace of a happy death, that by it, being purged of all our faults, we, who in this life are afflicted by the scourges of Thy dispensation, may receive our eternal rest in the life to come.

When the first sound of the bell announces that the priest is about to begin the Consecration, say:

O God, may this offering be blessed, and in every way acceptable and agreeable to Thee; and for our salvation's sake, and for the comfort of departed souls, be changed into the body and blood of Thy dear Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE CONSECRATION.

At the elevation of the sacred Host, profoundly bowing, say:

Hail! true body of Jesus Christ my Saviour! Oh, bless and sanctify my soul!

Then add:

Give them eternal rest, O Lord.

At the elevation of the chalice say:

Hail! true blood of Jesus, my Redeemer! Oh, wash me pure from all my sins!

Then add:

Give them eternal rest, O Lord. May they rest in peace.

AFTER THE CONSECRATION.

Commemorating, therefore, O Lord, the blessed Passion of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord, his resurrection from the dead, and his glorious ascension into heaven, we offer before the throne of Thy most excellent majesty, in behalf of these departed souls whom Thy justice still detains in the pains of temporal punishment, this most holy, pure, and unspotted victim, the holy bread of eternal life and the chalice of everlasting salvation.

A SPECIAL MEMENTO OF THE DEAD.

Be mindful especially, O Lord, of Thy servants [N.N.], who are gone before us with the sign of faith and rest in the sleep of peace. To these and to all who sleep in Christ grant, we beseech Thee, a place of refreshment, light, and peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Grant, O Lord, to Thy servants departed that they may not receive a return of punishment for their deeds who in desire were observers of Thy will; and that, as here true faith has joined them to the company of Thy faithful, so there Thy mercy may associate them to the choir of angels.

O God, whose attribute it is always to show mercy and to spare, we humbly beseech Thee for the souls of Thy faithful servants whom Thou hast called out of this world that Thou wouldst not deliver them into the hands of the enemy, nor forget them until the end, but command them to be received by the holy angels, and so be led to paradise, their true country; that as they have believed and hoped in Thee they may not suffer the pains of hell, but possess everlasting joys.

O God, the light of faithful souls, be present to our supplications, and grant to all Thy servants and handmaids whose bodies rest in Christ a seat

of refreshment, a blissful rest, and the light of glory.

We humbly pour out our prayers to Thee, O Lord, for these Thy servants, beseeching Thee that whatever guilt they may have contracted through human frailty Thou wilt mercifully pardon, and place them in the seat of those happy souls whom Thou hast redeemed. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To us also, sinners though we are, yet Thy servants, and trusting in the multitude of Thy mercies, deign to grant some part and fellowship with all Thy saints. Into their company we beseech Thee graciously to admit us, not weighing our merits, but Thy mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PATER NOSTER.

Repeat with the priest: "Our Father, who art in heaven," etc.; and then offer the following petition:

Deliver, O Lord, I beseech Thee, the souls of Thy servants from all sorrow and suffering, and bring them to the participation of Thy heavenly joys; and through the intercession of the blessed and glorious Mary, ever Virgin, Mother of God, of the holy apostles Peter and Paul and Andrew, and of all the saints, mercifully grant to me also

the pardon of my sins, grace to the remnant of my days, and peace in the hour of my death, that so, through the help of Thy mercy, in the awful hour of judgment I may stand before the face of my accusing enemy without alarm. Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Our Lord. Amen.

AGNUS DEI.

At the Agnus Dei pray thus:

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world! *Grant them rest.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world! *Grant them rest.*

Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world! *Grant them eternal rest.*

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, according to Thy Father's will, and by the coöperation of the Holy Ghost, hast given life to the world through Thine own death, deliver me by this Thy most sacred body and blood from all my sins and from every evil; make me cling to Thy commandments always, and never let me be separated from Thee.

O almighty and merciful God! I beseech Thee may all these sacraments in which it is our privilege to participate be the means of our purification; and grant that this Thy sacrifice may not be to us a ground of accusation for our punishment,

but a salutary intercession for our pardon; may it serve for the washing away of our guilt, for the strengthening of our frailty, and for a support against all the dangers of the world, and to all Thy faithful people, whether living or dead, for the remission of all their sins. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THE COMMUNION.

At the signal given by the little bell, when the priest, before receiving the sacred Host, strikes his breast three times, do the same, and say each time:

Lord! I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only speak the word, and my soul shall be healed.

Here you may make a spiritual Communion, uniting yourself in desire with the Communion of the priest. After which recite the following prayer:

To Almighty God, O dear departed brethren, we now commend you. May the bright company of the angels come to seek you; may the senate of the Apostles come to greet you; may the triumphant army of glorious martyrs come to meet you, the glittering throng of confessors encompass you with their lilies in their hands, the choir of virgins receive you with songs of joy, and a happy rest embrace you on the bosoms of the patriarchs.

AT THE LAST GOSPEL.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and in the last day I shall rise out of the earth: and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God: whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. This my hope is laid up for me in my bosom. (Job xix. 25.) I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in Me, shall not die forever. (John xi. 25.) And I heard a voice saying unto me: Write, blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; from henceforth now, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labors: for their works follow them. (Apoc. xiv. 13.)

R. Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS FOR CONFESSION.

Before Confession.

(St. Alphonsus.)

O God of infinite majesty, behold at Thy feet the traitor who has again offended Thee, but who now in all humility asks Thy pardon. O Lord, reject me not. Thou canst not despise an hum-

bled heart. I thank Thee for having waited for me up to the present moment, and for not having allowed me to die when I was in sin, to be sent to hell, as I had deserved. The patience Thou hast shown towards me, O my God, makes me hope that through the merits of Jesus Christ Thou wilt pardon me in this confession all my offences against Thee. I repent of them, and am grieved because I have deserved hell, and have lost heaven; but especially I am sorry for them from the bottom of my heart, not so much because I have deserved hell, but because I have displeased Thee, who art infinite goodness. Yes, I love Thee, O sovereign Good, and because I love Thee I repent of all my offences against Thee. I have turned my back upon Thee; I have been wanting in respect towards Thee; I have despised Thy grace, Thy friendship—in a word, O Lord, I have wilfully lost Thee. Ah! for the love of Jesus Christ forgive me all my sins. I repent of them with my whole heart; I hate, I detest them; I abhor them more than all evils; and I repent not only of my mortal, but also of my venial sins, which likewise displease Thee. I purpose for the future, with the help of Thy grace, never more wilfully to offend Thee. Yes, my God, I will rather die than sin again.

After Confession.

My dear Jesus, how much do I not owe Thee! By the merits of Thy blood I trust that I have this day been pardoned. I thank Thee exceedingly. I hope to praise Thy mercies forever in heaven. My God, if hitherto I have so often lost Thee, I will lose Thee no more for the time to come: I am resolved really to change my life. Thou deservest all my love; I wish to love Thee in good earnest. My will is never again to be separated from Thee. I have already promised Thee, and I promise Thee again at this moment, to consent rather to die than to offend Thee again. I promise to fly the occasion of sin, and to use this means . . . (here mention it) for not falling again.

But Thou, my Jesus, knowest my weakness; give me the grace to be faithful to Thee until death, and to have recourse to Thee in my temptations.

Most holy Virgin Mary, assist me. Thou art the Mother of perseverance; all my hope is in thee.

ACTS BEFORE AND AFTER COMMUNION.

Acts before Communion.

(St. Alphonsus.)

1. An Act of Faith.

Behold, *he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping over the hills.* Ah, my most amiable Saviour, over how many, what rough and craggy mountains, hast Thou had to pass in order to come and unite Thyself to me by means of this most holy Sacrament! Thou, from being God, hadst to become man; from being immense, to become a babe; from being Lord, to become a servant. Thou hadst to pass from the bosom of Thy Eternal Father to the womb of a Virgin; from heaven into a stable; from a throne of glory to the gibbet of a criminal. And on this very morning Thou wilt come from Thy seat in heaven to dwell in my bosom.

Behold, he standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking through the lattices. Behold, O my soul, thy loving Jesus, burning with the same love with which he loved thee when dying for thee on the cross, is now concealed in the most blessed Sacrament under the sacred

species; and what is he doing? *Looking through the lattices.* As an ardent lover desirous to see you correspond to his love, from the Host, as from within closed lattices, whence he sees without being seen, he is looking at you who are this morning about to feed upon his divine flesh; he observes your thoughts, what it is that you love, what you desire, what you seek for, and what offerings you are about to make him.

Awake, then, my soul, and prepare to receive thy Jesus; and, in the first place, by faith, say to him: So, then, my beloved Redeemer, in a few moments Thou art coming to me? O hidden God, unknown to the greater part of men, I believe, I confess, I adore Thee in the most holy Sacrament as my Lord and Saviour! And in acknowledgment of this truth I would willingly lay down my life. Thou comest to enrich me with Thy graces and to unite Thyself entirely to me; how great, then, should be my confidence in this Thy so loving visit!

2. An Act of Love.

Ah, my God, my God, true and only love of my soul, and what more couldst Thou have done to be loved by me? To die for me was not enough for Thee, my Lord; Thou wast pleased to institute this great Sacrament in order to give

Thyself all to me, and thus bind and unite Thyself heart to heart with so loathsome and ungrateful a creature as I am. And what is more, Thou Thyself invitest me to receive Thee, and desirest so much that I should do so! O boundless love! incomprehensible love! infinite love! a God would give himself all to me!—my soul, believest thou this? And what doest thou? what sayest thou? Oh, could I but cause Thee to be loved by all hearts as much as Thou deservest! I love Thee, O most amiable God, and I unite my miserable heart in loving Thee to the hearts of the seraphim, to the heart of the most blessed Virgin Mary, to the Heart of Jesus, Thy most loving and beloved Son. So that, O infinite Good, I love Thee with the love with which the saints, with which Mary, with which Jesus love Thee. And I love Thee only because Thou art worthy of it, and to give Thee pleasure. Depart, all earthly affections, that are not for God, depart from my heart. Mother of fair love, most holy Virgin Mary, help me to love that God whom thou dost so ardently desire to see loved!

3. An Act of Humility.

Then, my soul, thou art even now about to feed on the most sacred flesh of Jesus! And art thou worthy? My God, and who am I, and who

art Thou? I indeed know and confess who Thou art that givest Thyself to me; but dost Thou know what I am who am about to receive Thee? And is it possible, O my Jesus, that Thou who art infinite purity desirest to come and reside in this soul of mine, which has been so many times the dwelling of Thy enemy, and soiled with so many sins? I know, O my Lord, Thy great majesty and my misery; I am ashamed to appear before Thee. Reverence would induce me to keep at a distance from Thee; but if I depart from Thee, O my life, whither shall I go? to whom shall I have recourse? and what will become of me? No, never will I depart from Thee; nay, even I will ever draw nearer and nearer to Thee.

Thou art satisfied that I should receive Thee as food, Thou even invitest me to this. I come, then, O my amiable Saviour; I come to receive Thee this morning, all humbled and confused at the sight of my defects; but full of confidence in Thy tender mercy, and in the love which Thou bearest me.

4. An Act of Contrition.

I am indeed grieved, O God of my soul, for not having loved Thee during the time past; what is still worse, so far from loving Thee, and to gratify

my own inclinations, I have greatly offended and outraged Thy infinite goodness: I have turned my back upon Thee, I have despised Thy grace and friendship. Lord, I am sorry, and grieve for it with my whole heart. I detest the sins which I have committed, be they great or small, as the greatest of all my misfortunes, because I have thereby offended Thee, O infinite Goodness. I trust that Thou hast already forgiven me; but if Thou hast not yet pardoned me, oh, do so before I receive Thee: wash with Thy blood this soul of mine, in which Thou art so soon about to dwell.

5. An Act of Desire.

And now, my soul, the blessed hour has arrived in which Jesus will come and take us his dwelling in thy poor heart. Behold the King of heaven, behold thy Redeemer and God, who is even now coming; prepare thyself to receive him with love, invite him with the ardor of thy desire.

Most holy Virgin and my Mother Mary, behold I already approach to receive thy Son. Would that I had the heart and love with which thou didst communicate! Give me this morning thy Jesus, as thou didst give him to the shepherds and to the kings. I intend to receive him from thy most pure hands. Tell him that I am thy

servant and thy client; for he will thus look upon me with a more loving eye, and now that he is coming, will press me more closely to himself.

After Communion.

(St. Alphonsus.)

O my Jesus, now that Thou, who art the true Life, art come to me, make me die to the world, and to live only for Thee, my Redeemer; by the flames of Thy love destroy in me all that is displeasing to Thee, and give me a true desire to gratify and please Thee in all things.

Give me that true humility which shall make me love contempt and self-abjection, and take from me all ambition of putting myself forward. Give me the spirit of mortification, that I may deny myself all those things that do not tend to Thy love, and may lovingly embrace that which is displeasing to the senses and to self-love.

Give me a perfect resignation to Thy will, that I may accept in peace pains, infirmities, loss of friends or property, desolations, persecutions, and all that comes to me from Thy hand. I offer Thee my whole being, that Thou mayest dispose of me according to Thy pleasure. And give me grace always to repeat this entire offering of myself, especially at the time of my death. May I then offer the sacrifice of my life to Thee, in

union with the sacrifice that Thou didst make of Thy life for me to the Eternal Father. My Jesus, enlighten me, and make me to know Thy goodness, and the obligation I am under to love Thee above all for the love Thou hast borne me in dying for me, and in giving Thyself to me in the most holy Sacrament.

I pray Thee to give Thy light to all infidels who know Thee not, to all heretics who are out of the Church, and to all sinners who live deprived of Thy grace. My Jesus, make Thyself known, make Thyself loved. I recommend to Thee all the souls in purgatory, and especially N.N.; alleviate the pains they suffer, and shorten the time of their banishment from Thy sight. Do this through Thy merits, and those of Thy most holy Mother and of all Thy saints.

My God, enkindle the flame of Thy love within me, so that I may seek nothing but Thy good pleasure; that nothing may please me but pleasing Thee. I drive from my heart everything which is not agreeable to Thee. May I always be able to say with real affection: O God, my God, I wish for Thee alone and nothing more. My Jesus, give me a great love for Thy most sacred Passion, that Thy sufferings and death may be ever before my eyes to excite me to love Thee always, and to make me desire to give Thee some

grateful compensation for Thy so great love. Give me also a great love for the most holy Sacrament of the altar, in which Thou hast made known the exceeding tenderness Thou hast for us. I also beg of Thee to give me a tender devotion to Thy most holy Mother; give me grace always to love and serve her, always to have recourse to her intercession, and to induce others to honor her and confide in her patronage; and grant to me and to all men ever to have a great confidence, first in the merits of Thy Passion, and then in the intercession of Mary.

I pray Thee to grant me a happy death. Grant that I may then receive Thee with great love in the most holy Viaticum, that in Thy embrace, burning with a holy fire, and a great desire of seeing Thee, I may quit this life to cast myself at Thy feet as soon as it shall be my lot to behold Thee.

Above all, I pray Thee, O my Jesus, to give me the grace of prayer, that I may recommend myself always to Thee and Thy most holy Mother, especially in times of temptation; and I pray Thee, by Thy merits, to grant me holy perseverance and Thy holy love.

Bless me, my Jesus, and bless me entirely—my soul, my body, my senses, and my faculties. Bless especially my tongue, that it may only speak

for Thy glory. Bless my eyes, that they may not look at anything that might tempt me to displease Thee. Bless my taste, that it may not offend Thee by intemperance; and bless all the members of my body, that they may all serve Thee and not offend Thee. Bless my memory, that it may always remember Thy love and the favors Thou hast accorded me. Bless my understanding, that it may know Thy goodness, and the obligation I have of loving Thee; and that it may see all that I must avoid, and all that I must do to conform myself to Thy holy will. Above all, bless my will, that it may love no other but Thee, the infinite Good; that it may seek for nothing but to please Thee; and may take delight in nothing but what conduces to Thy glory.

O my King, come Thou and reign alone in my soul; take entire possession of it, that it may neither serve nor obey anything but Thy love.

O my Jesus, that I might spend myself all for Thee, who hast spent all Thy life for me!

O Lamb of God, sacrificed on the cross, remember that I am one of those souls which Thou hast redeemed with so much labor and sorrow. Never let me lose Thee again. Thou hast given Thyself all to me; make me to be all Thine, and let my only wish be to please Thee. I love Thee, O immense Good, in order to give Thee pleasure.

I love Thee, because Thou art worthy of my love. I have no greater grief than that of thinking that I have been so long in the world without loving Thee.

My beloved Redeemer, give me a portion of that grief which Thou didst feel for my sins in the garden of Gethsemane. O my Jesus, would that I had died and never offended Thee! O love of my Jesus, Thou art my love and my hope! I will rather lose my life, and a thousand, than lose Thy grace.

My God, if I were to die in sin, I could no more love Thee. I thank Thee that Thou givest me time, and dost call me to love Thee. Now, then, that I can love Thee, I will love Thee with all my soul. Thou hast borne with me so long that I might love Thee. Yes, and I will love Thee. Ah, by the blood that Thou hast shed for me, suffer me not to betray Thee again. "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me not be confounded forever." What is the world? what are riches? what are pleasures? what are honors? O my God, I wish for Thee alone. My God, Thou art sufficient for me; Thou art an infinite Good.

O my Jesus, bind me wholly to Thy love, and draw all my affections to Thyself, so that I may love none other but Thee. Make me all Thine before I die.

Ah, my God, as long as I live I stand in danger of losing Thee. When shall the day come that I can say: My Jesus, I can no longer lose Thee?

O Eternal Father, for the love of Jesus Christ, despise me not; suffer me to love Thee, and give me Thy holy love. I wish to love Thee greatly in this life, that I may love Thee greatly in the next.

O infinite Good, I love Thee; but do Thou make me know the great good that I love, and give me the love which Thou dost desire to see in me. Enable me to overcome all things to please Thee.

ANIMA CHRISTI.

Soul of Jesus, sanctify me.
Body of Jesus, save me.
Blood of Jesus, wash me.
Water out of the side of Jesus, purify me.
Passion of Jesus, comfort me.
O good Jesus, hear me.
Hide me within Thy sacred wounds.
O Sacred Heart of Jesus, receive me.
O immaculate heart of Mary, plead for me, and love me.

VESPERS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.

"Our Father" and "Hail Mary" being said in silence, the priest intones:

O God, incline unto my aid.

R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Ant. Whilst the king was on his couch, my spikenard yielded a sweet odor.

PSALM CIX.

The Lord said to my lord: Sit Thou at my right hand:

Until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.

The Lord shall send forth the rod of Thy power from out of Sion: rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.

Thine shall be the dominion in the day of Thy power, amid the brightness of the saints: from the womb before the day-star have I begotten Thee.

The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchisedech.

The Lord upon Thy right hand hath overthrown kings in the day of his wrath.

He shall judge among the nations, he shall fulfil destructions: he shall smite in sunder the heads in the land of many.

He shall drink of the brook in the way: therefore shall he lift up his head.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Ant. Whilst the king, etc.

Ant. His left hand is under my head: and his right hand embraces me.

PSALM CXII.

Praise the Lord, ye children: praise ye the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, from this time forth forevermore.

From the rising up of the sun unto the going down of the same: the name of the Lord is worthy to be praised.

The Lord is high above all nations: and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like unto the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high: and regardeth the things that are lowly in heaven and on earth?

Who raiseth up the needy from the earth: and lifteth the poor from off the dunghill:

That he may set him with the princes: even with the princes of his people.

Who maketh the barren woman to dwell in her house: the joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Ant. His left hand.

Ant. I am black, but beautiful, O daughters of Jerusalem: therefore the king loved me and brought me into his chamber.

PSALM CXXI.

I was glad at the things that were said unto me: We will go into the house of the Lord.

Our feet were wont to stand: in thy courts, O Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, which is built as a city: that is at unity with itself.

For thither did the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord: the testimony of Israel, to praise the name of the Lord.

For there are set the seats of judgment: the seats over the house of David.

Pray ye for the things that are for the peace of Jerusalem: and plenteousness be to them that love thee.

Let peace be in thy strength: and plenteousness in thy towers.

For my brethren and companions' sake: I spoke peace concerning thee.

Because of the house of the Lord our God: I have sought good things for thee.

Glory, etc.

Ant. I am black.

Ant. Now the winter is past, the rain over and gone; arise my love and come.

PSALM CXXVI.

Unless the Lord build the house: they labor in vain that build it.

Unless the Lord keep the city: he watcheth in vain that keepeth it.

In vain ye rise before the light: rise not till ye have rested, O ye that eat the bread of sorrow.

When he hath given sleep to his beloved: lo, children are an heritage from the Lord, and the fruit of the womb a reward.

Like as arrows in the hand of the mighty one: so are the children of those who have been cast out.

Blessed is the man whose desire is satisfied with them: he shall not be confounded, when he speaketh with his enemies in the gate.

Glory, etc.

Ant. Now the winter.

Ant. Thou art beautiful and sweet in thy perfumes, O sacred Mother of God.

PSALM CXLVII.

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem: praise thy God, O Sion.

For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates: he hath blessed thy children within thee.

He hath made peace within thy borders: and filleth thee with the fatness of corn.

He sendeth forth his commandment on the earth: his word runneth very swiftly.

He giveth snow like wool: he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.

He sendeth his ice like morsels: who is able to abide his frost?

He shall send forth his word, and melt them: he shall blow with his wind, and the waters shall flow.

He maketh known his word unto Jacob: his justices and judgments unto Israel.

He hath not dealt so with any nation: neither hath he showed them his judgments.

Glory, etc.

Ant. Thou art beautiful and sweet in thy perfumes, O sacred Mother of God.

THE LITTLE CHAPTER.

(Ecclus. xxiv.)

From the beginning, and before ages, I was created, and shall not cease in the world to come:

and I have ministered before him in the holy habitation.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN.

Bright Mother of our Maker, hail!
Thou Virgin ever blessed;
The ocean's Star by which we sail,
And gain the port of rest!

Whilst we this *Ave* thus to thee
From Gabriel's mouth rehearse,
Prevail that peace our lot may be,
And *Eva's* name reverse.

Release our long entangled mind
From all the snares of ill;
With heav'nly light instruct the blind,
And all our vows fulfil.

Exert for us a Mother's care,
And us, thy children, own;
Prevail with him to hear our prayer,
Who chose to be thy Son.

O spotless maid! whose virtues shine
With brightest purity;
Each action of our life refine,
And make us pure like thee.

Preserve our lives unstained from ill,
And guard us in our way;
That Christ, one day, our souls may fill
With joys that ne'er decay.

To God the Father, endless praise;
To God the Son, the same,
And Holy Ghost, whose equal rays,
One equal glory claim. Amen.

V. Vouchsafe, O sacred Virgin, to accept my praises.

R. Give me strength against thy enemies.

Ant. O holy Mary, succor the miserable, help the faint-hearted, pray for the people, intercede for the clergy, make intercession for the devout female sex: let all be sensible of thy help who celebrate thy holy festivity.

V. Grace is spread upon thy lips.

R. Therefore hath God blessed thee forever.

Ant. All generations shall call me blessed, because the Lord hath looked on his lowly handmaid.

THE MAGNIFICAT, OR CANTICLE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

My soul doth magnify the Lord.

And my spirit hath rejoiced: in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid: for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For he that is mighty hath done great things unto me: and holy is his name.

And his mercy is from generation to generation: unto them that fear him.

He hath showed strength with his arm: he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their heart.

He hath put down the mighty from their seat: and hath exalted the humble.

He hath filled the hungry with good things: and the rich he hath sent empty away.

He hath upholden his servant Israel: being mindful of his mercy.

As he spake unto our fathers: to Abraham and his seed forever.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Glory, etc.

V. The Lord be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

V. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

V. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

R. Amen.

THE STATIONS OR WAY OF THE CROSS.

In order to gain the many indulgences granted to this devotion (which are applicable to the souls in purgatory), the following conditions must be complied with: (1) We must, as we go along, meditate on the Passion of Our Lord, as far as our capacity will allow; and (2) we must move from one Station to the other, unless the crowded state of the church renders this impossible. We should then at least turn towards each successive Station as the procession moves along.

Manner of Practising the Exercise of the Way of the Cross.

Let each one, kneeling before the high altar, make an act of contrition, and form the intention of gaining the indulgences, whether for himself or for the souls in purgatory. Then say:

My Lord Jesus Christ, Thou hast made this journey to die for me with love unutterable, and I have so many times unworthily abandoned Thee; but now I love Thee with my whole heart, and because I love Thee I repent sincerely for having ever offended Thee. Pardon me, my God, and permit me to accompany Thee on this journey. Thou goest to die for love of me; I wish also, my beloved Redeemer, to die for love of

Thee. My Jesus, I will live and die always united to Thee.

FIRST STATION.

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

V. We adore Thee, O Christ, and praise Thee.

R. Because by Thy holy cross Thou hast redeemed the world.

Consider that Jesus, after having been scourged and crowned with thorns, was unjustly condemned by Pilate to die on the cross.

My adorable Jesus, it was not Pilate, no, it was my sins, that condemned Thee to die. I beseech Thee, by the merits of this sorrowful journey, to assist my soul in its journey towards eternity. I love Thee, Jesus, my love, I love Thee more than myself; I repent with my whole heart of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

SECOND STATION.

JESUS IS MADE TO BEAR HIS CROSS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider that Jesus, in making this journey

with the cross on his shoulders, thought of us, and offered for us to his Father the death that he was about to undergo.

My most beloved Jesus, I embrace all the tribulations that Thou hast destined for me until death. I beseech Thee, by the merits of the pain Thou didst suffer in carrying Thy cross, to give me the necessary help to carry mine with perfect patience and resignation. I love Thee, Jesus, my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to separate myself from Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

THIRD STATION.

JESUS FALLS THE FIRST TIME UNDER HIS CROSS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider this first fall of Jesus under his cross. His flesh was torn by the scourges, his head crowned with thorns, and he had lost a great quantity of blood. He was so weakened that he could scarcely walk, and yet he had to carry this great load upon his shoulders. The soldiers struck him rudely, and thus he fell several times on his journey.

My beloved Jesus, it is not the weight of the cross, but of my sins, which has made Thee suffer so much pain. Ah, by the merits of this first fall, deliver me from the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. I love Thee, O my Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

FOURTH STATION.

JESUS MEETS HIS AFFLICTED MOTHER.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider the meeting of the Son and the Mother, which took place on this journey. Jesus and Mary looked at each other, and their looks became as so many arrows to wound those hearts which loved each other so tenderly.

My most loving Jesus, by the sorrow Thou didst experience in this meeting, grant me the grace of a truly devoted love for Thy most holy Mother. And thou, my Queen, who wast overwhelmed with sorrow, obtain for me by thy intercession a continual and tender remembrance of the Passion of thy Son. I love Thee, Jesus, my love; I repent of ever having offended Thee.

Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

FIFTH STATION.

THE CYRENIAN HELPS JESUS TO CARRY HIS CROSS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider that the Jews, seeing that at each step Jesus, from weakness, was on the point of expiring, and fearing that he would die on the way, when they wished him to die the ignominious death of the cross, constrained Simon the Cyrenian to carry the cross behind Our Lord.

My most sweet Jesus, I will not refuse the cross as the Cyrenian did; I accept it, I embrace it. I accept in particular the death that Thou hast destined for me, with all the pains which may accompany it; I unite it to Thy death; I offer it to Thee. Thou hast died for love of me; I will die for love of Thee, and to please Thee. Help me by Thy grace. I love Thee, Jesus, my love; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

SIXTH STATION.

VERONICA WIPES THE FACE OF JESUS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider that the holy woman named Veronica, seeing Jesus so afflicted, and his face bathed in sweat and blood, presented him with a towel, with which he wiped his adorable face, leaving on it the impression of his holy countenance.

My most beloved Jesus, Thy face was beautiful before, but in this journey it has lost all its beauty, and wounds and blood have disfigured it. Alas! my soul also was once beautiful, when it received Thy grace in baptism; but I have disfigured it since by my sins; Thou alone, my Redeemer, canst restore it to its former beauty. Do this by Thy Passion, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

SEVENTH STATION.

JESUS FALLS THE SECOND TIME.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider the second fall of Jesus under the cross—a fall which renews the pain of all the

Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

TENTH STATION.

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider the violence with which the executioners stripped Jesus. His inner garments adhered to his torn flesh, and they dragged them off so roughly that the skin came with them. Compassionate your Saviour thus cruelly treated, and say to him:

My innocent Jesus, by the merits of the torment that Thou hast felt, help me to strip myself of all affection to things of earth, in order that I may place all my love in Thee, who art so worthy of my love. I love Thee, O Jesus, with my whole heart; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

ELEVENTH STATION.

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider that Jesus, after being thrown on the cross, extended his hands, and offered to his Eternal Father the sacrifice of his life for our salvation. These barbarians fastened him with nails; and then, raising the cross, left him to die with anguish on this infamous gibbet.

My Jesus, loaded with contempt, nail my heart to Thy feet, that it may ever remain there to love Thee, and never quit Thee again. I love Thee more than myself; I repent of having offended Thee. Never permit me to offend Thee again. Grant that I may love Thee always; and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

TWELFTH STATION.

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS.

V. We adore Thee, etc.

R. Because, etc.

Consider that thy Jesus, after three hours' agony on the cross, consumed at length with

may love Thee always, and then do with me what Thou wilt.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be, etc.

After this, return to the high altar, and say, "Our Father," "Hail Mary," and "Glory be," etc., five times, in honor of the Passion of Jesus Christ, to gain the other indulgences granted to those who recite them. At the end, the "Our Father," the "Hail Mary," and the "Glory be to the Father" may be said for the intention of the Sovereign Pontiff.

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